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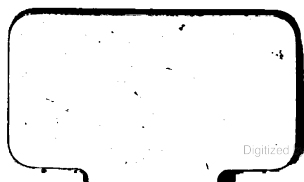
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LIFE IN CHRIST.



J. Denham Smith.



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LIFE IN CHRIST:

BY

J. DENHAM SMITH.



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PREFACE.

THE following Christ-exalting addresses originally appeared in the pages of the "*Latter Rain*," and were accompanied with many evidences of the Lord's blessing.

This induced the Editor to re-issue them in the present improved form; the whole having been revised and considerably enlarged by Mr. Denham Smith, for this purpose.

They are now sent forth, with much prayer, in the earnest hope that the Holy Spirit may be pleased to use them in the salvation and upbuilding of multitudes of souls.

C. R. H.

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CHRIST

RISEN AND ASCENDED.

LUKE xxiv. 13—35.

THESE two disciples, beloved, were on their way to Emmaus on the evening of that resurrection-day; and not either knowing of, or believing in the resurrection, they were in great sadness of spirit; like her, who at early morn of that same day the blessed Lord had met beside His own empty tomb, sorrowing because, as she said, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him."

Ah! I wonder if *your* heart has ever been wrung to its very depths with sorrow at the absence of the Lord. I wonder whether you have found Him whom our souls love; or whether in soul-agony you are longing after Jesus—longing for the rest,

the peace, the joy, which, already beside you, He is waiting to bestow. Very blessed are such longings—a very feast, as was Mary's tearful affection, to Him who delights to reveal Himself.

Beloved, did you ever remark that the Lord showed Himself only to *disciples* after He had risen? there is not a solitary instance of His having appeared to any *but* disciples after His resurrection; as if to teach us that only to those who had known Him in His humiliation and rejection does He belong in His resurrection glory. And so now, unless we too know Him, and own Him in this "little while" of His rejection, and unless we know the value of His shed blood as the crucified ONE, we shall never know Him in resurrection.

And then notice, that as a rule, He appeared to none but sorrowing ones. He first revealed Himself to Mary of Magdala at early morn. There she stood, absorbed in her grief; truly a sorrowing one. She was longing to know something—to obtain some trace, however faint, of One who had been to her unspeakably precious, and so in her

grief she applied to the gardener, as she supposed, saying : " If thou hast borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away."

Then again, as here, we see the blessed Lord revealing Himself to these two disciples, journeying though they were, with their backs upon the scene of His death and resurrection ; well He knew they were in sorrow for lack of Him. And hence that loving enquiry : " What manner of communications are these that ye have one with another, as ye walk and are sad ?" And then again to Simon, though it is not stated under what circumstances, yet we know that the Lord did especially shew Himself to Peter.

Truly Simon was another of these sorrowing disciples ; in all the warm impulsiveness of his character, he had sworn that he would die for his Master ; but when the moment of trial came he utterly failed. Thrice he denied all association with or knowledge of Him ; but the Lord, even in the midst of His own deep sufferings, was

not unconscious of Peter. And casting His eye around, He rested it with loving but reproachful tenderness upon His erring, cowardly disciple; Peter remembered the words, "The cock shall not crow *thrice*;" it came with terrible power into his soul; also that other word, "But Peter, I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." Hence he was broken down in very sorrow. Moreover the Lord *looked* upon him. O, that look! Peter's heart melted beneath that glance of Divine affection. He could not bear up under it; he went out and wept bitterly; very deep was the grief of that heart, and the Lord knew it, and so He indulged this sorrowing one with special comfort; a message to *him* was among the first words which He spake on rising from the tomb: "Tell my disciples and Peter"—"and Peter." O, how precious! "and Peter." You know, beloved, we are not told that He ever thus appeared to Mary and Martha of Bethany, who were in communion with His mind and purpose, and who doubtless believed in the resurrection, and so never went to seek Him

at an empty sepulchre ; but where His eye discerned genuine want, a real longing for Himself, even though there might be lack of intelligence, there the dear Lord delighted to reveal Himself. And so we find Him again on the same errand in the evening of this resurrection day, when He appeared to those *ten* disciples in that upper room, (for you remember Thomas was not there, and Judas was not there,) and breathed His own peace in their midst. On the next Lord's day we again find Him there ; but this time Thomas was present—Thomas who had declared that he would not believe in His resurrection unless he were indeed to see and touch the very wounds. The Lord had heard his faithless assertion ; yet how graciously He indulged this doubting one with the sign that he asked. All that little band were more or less a band of unbelieving believers. You may remind me that He appeared before His ascension to more than 500 brethren at once. Was it not on the occasion of a leave-taking ? and oh ! what a leave-taking ! He had been unfolding to them

something of His purposes of mind concerning them when He should no longer be with them, and then He gently leads them out as far as to Bethany; and then He blesses them, during which He separates Himself from them; and this He does, whilst the disciples, with longing, piercing eye endeavour to follow the fainter and yet fainter form of His ascending person, and even when the last trace of their loved Master has faded away, they gaze on and on upon that little piece of sky where last they saw Him, until they were assured that He had indeed gone, ascended, according to His own remembered word: "I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God," and until the angel voices had re-echoed His own blessed promise of return, saying, "This same Jesus whom you have seen go into heaven, shall in like manner come again."

And now, more particularly as to ourselves: the Lord is still the same "yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Oh! if there be one here saying: I am longing for Jesus; of all things in the world I

desire most, it is to have Him as my Saviour ; to be able to say : “ Jesus is mine.” Ah ! beloved, if this be the burden of your heart here this morning, be assured He will indulge you as He did the sorrowing ones of whom we have been speaking ; He will come to you, nay, He is even now near you—with you. He it is who gave you your longing of soul for Him ; and He never said to any : “ Seek ye my face in vain.” He never created an ocean bed, but that He might fill it ; and He never created in any heart a desire, a longing after Himself, which He will not fully satisfy.

And as Jesus, and Jesus only, is the full satisfaction of every heart thus longing ; so, beloved, Jesus will satisfy *your* longing. Oh ! there is something blessed in the manner in which He came to those two disciples at their fishing, ere the day dawned. Peter perhaps had thought that though he had been present with the other disciples when Jesus said, “ Peace be unto you,” yet that the Lord could surely have nothing more to do with *him*. But see the manner of the Lord, how blessed ! He

first says, "Children, have ye any meat?" And then, beloved, what grace! He Himself serves them, gives them to eat of the bread and fish of His own providing; and then He gives to Peter his special commission to feed His sheep—to feed His lambs. How like, in His grace, to His dealing with Thomas, giving him the very thing which he asked for. "Reach hither," said He, "thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing." Oh! dear sinner, the Lord will indulge thee. He knows fully what difficulties lie in the way of your coming to Him. He takes note of your peculiarities which make it hard for you to believe on Him; and He'll surely come to thee, longing, seeking one, and reveal Himself fully to thy yearning heart. And O! dear backsliding one, He too will bear with thee—indulge thee with special indulgence of His pity and His love. He knows the paths of evil where you have been. He it is who gave thee thy longing to return. His wounded side is again shown to thee, and Hi

pierced hands and feet. Put your hand, as it were, down into those wounds, and hear Him say to thee, "I am Jesus—I am your Saviour, be not faithless, but believing." Let us again turn more directly to the verses upon which we are meditating. What delicate touches have we here! What glimpses of Divine tenderness and skill! How often the Lord opens the subject with a question, as if the testimony to Himself thus elicited, was a very feast which He loved. And so we hear Him asking, "What manner of communications are these which ye have?" And then having instructed them from all the Scriptures in the things concerning Himself, on reaching the village whither they went, "He made as though He would have gone further." And, indeed, how could the blessed Lord have done otherwise? They had treated Him as a *stranger*. "Art Thou only a *stranger*?" said they; and what right had a stranger to expect hospitality? How could He treat them as friends, since they had treated Him as a stranger? "He made as though He would have gone further."

There is something here so exquisitely natural." If they had owned Him as the Saviour, doubtless, without an invitation, He would have gone in and sat down to meat with them ; but how could a *stranger* act thus ? " But they constrained Him, saying, Abide with us." And then upon that ground—upon the ground of their having *asked* Him, He did go in. Little thought they what Divine guest they were entertaining ; little did they imagine that the risen One, of whom they had been speaking by the way, was Himself beside them, until He took bread and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them ; then their eyes were opened, and they knew Him. But it was too late, He had vanished out of their sight. Their hearts were too full of wonder and joy to remain at home ; they could not keep the intelligence to themselves ; so they rose up the same hour, and returned to the assembled disciples at Jerusalem, saying, " The Lord is risen indeed." Scarcely had they uttered the glad tidings, when Jesus ratified the intelligence by Himself appearing in their

midst. He had arrived almost as soon as His messengers ! He *Himself* had come. The very one they wanted. Each one of them felt a want which He only could meet. Ah ! beloved, again I say, how blessedly the Lord understood those disciples.

And it is very precious to notice, too, that in all these interviews there is not a single mention or thought of sin ; it is all out of sight, all left behind. He who imputed nothing to the returned prodigal in Luke xv. imputed nothing to them. Sweet are these ways of His grace. Yea, grace manifested on the ground of righteousness. For death having transpired, sin is buried—gone, and hence no more wrath—no more remembrance. So, says Paul,

“If Christ be not risen, ye are yet in your sins.” “But now is Christ risen from the dead.” Therefore, believing, ye are not in your sins. This is *the gospel*. And He, having died, the just for the unjust, having given His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair, having taken the place—the sin

—the doom of the sinner, there is now no need for the sinner to die. We were with Him as He died for us on the tree—we were buried as together with Him in the tomb, and now we are on the resurrection side of His grave, where there is no more death ; all against us is overpast. And now He has gone in yonder, back to *His* Father and *our* Father—to *His* God and *our* God. Oh ! beloved, this is the gospel ! these are *glad* tidings,—Christ once in death, but now in risen glory. He was delivered because of our sins, He was raised again because of our justification. And because Christ has died, therefore sin has been put away. He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities. But because He has risen, and because He is ascended, every believing sinner is as He is before God—divinely accepted.

Ah ! beloved, if you will only gaze a little now upon the Son of God. He was from all eternity with the Father, sharing His glory, but came down here and took upon Him, sin excepted, the condition of the sinner. He bore on His own blessed

person, all the load of our sin. He bore the transgression of the sinner; and inasmuch as God required at the hand of the sinner's Substitute all the satisfaction which His justice had demanded of the sinner, and inasmuch as nothing but an infinite death could meet that infinite claim, the Lord Jesus Christ must *die*; but death having taken place, there is the end of the law, which could neither ask or require *more* than death, and there is an end of sin, which is for ever blotted out by the shed blood. God then is satisfied; His justice, His righteousness, His holiness, His truth, find a complete and eternal vindication in that death, and hence the Father raises His Son from the tomb. And so, beloved, as I said, sin, death, judgment, are all behind—all overpast, and we can gaze upon him yonder seated in rest and acceptance there. Oh! what a sight for you, for me. Yes, we can follow Him right on and on “inside the veil;” for entering in there He left the door wide open behind Him,—the kingdom of heaven He has opened to all believers. And,

further, beloved, in Him who is gone in yonder,
 you and I can see our right and title to be there.
 As He once stood for me in death, I see Him now
 standing for me in life ; so that looking upon Him
 there—gazing upon the ascended One, in Him it
 is, and *not* in myself,

“ I read my title clear
 To mansions in the skies ;
 I bid farewell to every fear
 And wipe my weeping eyes.”

Ah ! beloved, beloved, 'tis Jesus, Jesus, Jesus
 only, nothing but Jesus as the rock of our salvation
 —the ground of all our hope and assurance ; and
 when we have done with this “ little while ” of our
 absence from Him, when He gets us up there into
 His own presence, He will say to us, “ I am glad I
 ever died for you. I am glad that ever I resigned
 my glories for a time, and exchanged them for
 toil and suffering. I am glad now to have you
 with me ; without you I could not be perfect, I
 could not be satisfied ; I wanted an object in which
 I could rest, in which I could delight ; I wanted

an object to make manifest the great love and glory of My Father, I wanted an object to share my glory, I wanted heirs; and now it is my joy to have you here with me." Oh! beloved,

"Him eye to eye we then shall see,
Our face like His shall shine."

Meanwhile, down here, on the earth, for a little while we are the children of faith. The Lord give us more simply to look to Him, more perfectly to resemble Him. And especially to remember this, that if the Lord has in very deed taken my death, then I have not to die; if He has suffered all my doom, then there remains no more for me to endure; if the Lord has paid my utmost debt, I have nothing to pay—*nothing*.

"Nothing, either great or small,
Nothing, sinner, no;
Jesus did it, did all,
Long—long ago.

The only question I have to raise, if there be one, is concerning my Surety; if He is accepted, then *I am* free. And all that I have to know, as before God, is concerning the Lord Jesus Christ; if He

is accepted, then am I; if He is justified from all my sins which God laid upon Him, then surely I may have perfect rest concerning them; if He is yonder in divine rest and completeness, then my completeness is secure. We are in the same merit, the same relationship, in the same rank, in the presence of the same glory; and all this through the merit of His blood, and on the ground of *that*, we may all enter. "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." Thus resurrection, along with His having ascended, puts us where He now is, as His worshippers, within the veil, as we sing:—

"Through Thy precious body broken,
 Inside the veil,
 Oh what words to sinners spoken—
 Inside the veil,
 Precious, as the blood that bought us;
 Perfect, as the love that sought us;
 Holy, as the Lamb that brought us
 Inside the veil."

There were two things mentioned by Matthew which occurred at the crucifixion; the one was, that

“the vail of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom,” the other, that “the graves were opened, and many of the bodies of the saints which slept, arose.” The first showed that now there was no obstacle to access to God ; the second that not only was there access, but life, resurrection, incorruption ; life and immortality, brought to light through Christ.

There is now therefore no vail between the purged worshipper and God. And our place of acceptance in Jesus is “within the veil,” where He now is ; and as all in that scene must be unsullied purity and holiness, it follows, that if you and I are there, we must have a meetness—we must have corresponding fitness for the presence of God ; and this, beloved, was in the Father’s plan and purpose ; it was His eternal counsel, that we “should be holy and without blame before Him in love.” In ourselves we are but defilement—a heap of corruption ; but in the Son of His love, we are meet for the presence of spotless Divine holiness. It is well to know what

we are before God ; that we are His workmanship ; and what we are in Christ. As His workmanship, we possess a *Divine* nature, which must of necessity be holy ; and the very moment a soul is born of God, it has within it the *Divine* nature ; for that which is born of God, must be of the nature of God ; that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and nothing but flesh ; but that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. The instant a soul is born of God, that instant it is a partaker of the Divine nature. But besides this, and that in which we stand before God, is the standing in holiness which the Lord Himself has.

“Ours is such a full salvation.” Oh, what heights—what depths of precious, wondrous things lie hidden in Jesus ! Oh, that we would search them out ! Oh, that we would give ourselves up to the Spirit’s teaching, who revealeth *all things*, yea, the deep things of God ! and, adds the Apostle, “God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit.” Beloved, may I put it to you ? “What do you know of these deep things of God ?” Oh ! it is

for this, that we get up into the Father's thought, and down, shall I say, into the depths of His love, that we are thus met this morning ; not so much to meet each other ; but to meet God Himself—to see Jesus, and “Jesus only,” and to see Him where all is perfectness, “inside the veil,” where all is rest.

“ In that circle of God's favour,
 Circle of the Father's love ;
 All is *rest*, and *rest* for ever—
 All is perfectness above.”

Not a particle of sin there ; not a thread of the old nature there ; not a spot, not a stain there ; but one eternal sunlight, undimmed with cloud or shadow ; one unfading glory is there ! and there, beloved, amid that blaze of Divine, ineffable glory, you and I even now, in spirit, and along with the risen and ascended and accepted One, can take our stand ; as we often sing :—

“ I stand upon the mount of God,
 With sunlight in my soul ;
 I hear the storms in vales beneath,
 I hear the thunders roll.

But I am calm with Thee, my God,
 Beneath these glorious skies ;
 And to the height on which I stand,
 Nor storm nor clouds can rise,
 O this is life ! O this is joy !
 My God, to find Thee so ;
 Thy face to see, Thy voice to hear,
 And all Thy love to know."

" Thy voice to hear ; " yes, beloved, for if we are within the veil, we are ever within reach of that voice—within reach of *His* voice. This now, *in spirit* ; but oh ! a little more of this " little while," and in fact,

" Soon Thy saints shall all be gathered,
 Inside the veil,
 All at home—no more be scattered,
 Inside the veil."

And oh ! what will you do, when you find yourselves there. When you stand there, not as now, in feebleness and weakness, and in want, but in all His manifested glory ; when you find yourselves there, without any possibility of relapse, or of sin or of fleshly infirmity, marring in the faintest measure, your perfect likeness to Him.

Ah! then no more any possibility of age, weakness, or decrepitude again paralysing your service for Him: you will have an infinite knowledge un-mixed with error—boundless affection, that will know no chill. O what a heaven! Millions upon millions of years, the constant flow of whose peace and joy, and ceaseless praise, will know no interruption; the eye fastening upon the beauty and glory of the Beloved, the heart with an infinite capacity to know and understand, the whole soul occupied with Him—with Him.

Oh! beloved, all that one can say, or even think, as to these visions of glory, is but a picture—the mere representation. And the mere picture of bread will never satisfy, and the mere representation will never do instead of the glorious reality. By and by, in a little while, there will be for us the full, (we have in part now,) the final glorious reality.

Oh, then what fulness of satisfaction will there be, when the eye gets to gaze upon all that there will be to be seen; it will be the soul returning

into all its own provided elements ; like the rivers rolling their waters into the ocean bed, and all obstacles removed, the soul will go on finding out more and more of Him !

We often sing of how “our face like His shall shine ;” but we shall know very little about our faces shining—we shall not have a thought about ourselves ; believe me, heaven makes very little of ourselves. We shall forget ourselves, forget one another there. For, albeit, I might be going into the glory thinking, “The first person I meet may perhaps be my child waiting to welcome me ;” yet when I see *Him*, when His face meets mine, I shall forget the child. There will be nothing there to interfere with this blessed absorption of the soul in the dear Lord himself. Ah ! beloved people, think of yourselves in reference to that scene, as those who are so shortly to mingle in its glory. Even now, one can get there. Even *now* we may in some sort realize our position, a position which the Lord Jesus had purchased for us. He came down and took upon Him our nature ;

whilst we get a Divine nature—eternal *life*. God gets, beloved, and we get.

For redemption brings Him the highest glory; He owes all that is more precious than anything else to His own work for us. He had angels; but they never satisfied; He wanted redeemed sinners; He wanted you and me, beloved. Ah! He wanted more than we; and He gets more than we ever get; since it is a far greater thing for the infinite to be satisfied, than the finite. The Lord came down because He would have every want of the eternal love fully satisfied. We know not what *His* want was, what that want must have been which made the agony of His cross to be as nothing in prospect of the coming glory. Ah! what would have been the good of all the preparation on the father's part of the ring, and the shoes, and the fatted calf. What would have been the good of all those heavenly chimes, those instruments of song, waiting to send up the melodious euphony? Where would have been the good of all the angelic

choristers standing ready for the moment of accomplished redemption to give forth the loudest anthems of glory. Ah! what would all this have been, if the prodigal had not come home? Believe me, if the sinner had never been redeemed, the music of eternal ages would have been kept back, and songs upon songs which then broke forth, reverberating and re-echoing amid all the eternal corridors of heaven would have lost their theme. And above and beyond all this, God would have failed of *His* satisfaction joy; *that* without us could never have been made perfect. This, beloved, is the gospel—the gospel of God’s love—of His joy—the glorious gospel of the happy God; the gospel of His own eternal glory. Beloved, do you understand: well, ere we separate may we again and again sing:—

“Soon Thy saints shall all be gathered,
 Inside the veil.

All at home, no more be scattered,
 Inside the veil.

Nought from Thee our hearts shall sever,
 We shall see Thee, grieve Thee never;
 ‘Praise the Lamb!’ shall sound for ever
 Inside the veil.”

ABIDING IN CHRIST.

“In Him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not”—1 John iii. 5, 6.

NOT that we have *no* sin; for that would imply absolute perfection, and would be contrary to the Word. “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” What the passage says is, that “whosoever ABIDETH in Him sinneth not.” The word “abideth” is the chief one in the sentence, and determines its meaning; namely, that ABIDING in Him (in communion) *absolutely* we do not sin. The evil root and Christ alike are in us. If our souls are joined to the evil root, sin will be the fruit; but if to Christ (in communion), we shall not sin; this is the plain statement. The two

scriptures must be taken together. "In *Him* is no sin; and whosoever *abideth in Him* sinneth not." The truth is, that joined in communion to *Him*, from *Him* can come no sin.

The doctrine, then, I believe to be, that the soul abiding in Christ will not *actively sin*; being alive unto God, we are dead to sin: sin in the flesh will not only have *no dominion* over us, but for the time (would that it were always!) it will *lie in abeyance*, its deeds *mortified*. The soul for the time, whilst in communion, is applied *only to Christ*, and only Christ can *flow forth through it*.

This surely sheds light on John xv., where the Vine is Christ, and saints are the branches. Their true condition is to ABIDE in Christ, as branches in the Vine. If they *do*, fruit from Christ will flow forth through them. If not, the blessed connection for the time is lost, and there can be *no fruit*. They are like dead branches, which the Lord declares are worthless—"Cast forth as a branch, and withered."

It is as if He had said, "You know men's

estimate of *dead* branches, and what they do with them ; fit only for the burning, they cast them into the fire." Not that *saints* are to be cast into the fire ; but that the casting into the fire shows how useless for fruit the dead branches are. So the saint is utterly useless for service, unless he be *abiding* in Christ. Let him lose his communion (the deep connection which his soul has with Christ in communion), and at once he ceases to bear fruit. "The branch cannot bear fruit of *itself*." It must have connection with the tree.

A tube, for example, is useless to give sweet water, unless applied to the sweet spring. Let it be applied to a bitter spring, and it will give forth bitter water. So if the soul be applied to the flesh, or walk according to the flesh, the result will be corruption. If, in realised communion, it be applied to Christ, the result will be according to Him. Such rendering of these passages leaves us without the difficulty of putting any construction on them other than what they plainly and absolutely say, namely,—that if we *abide in Christ, we sin*

not—sin will not have dominion over us; and that if we abide in Christ, *we shall have fruit.*

This does not involve Christian perfection; for sin, the evil *root* or spring, *is still in us*, and if *allowed*, would act as ever. Sin, *in us*, is never *absolutely* dead. One of Paul's holiest moments was when he had just emerged from the third heaven; yet it was then a thorn in the flesh was given him, *lest he should be exalted* above measure; that is, *lest he should sin*. No exercise of faith on our part can do away with fact, the fact being that sin is still in us, as Paul says, in Galatians, "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh." It is never *subject to the law of God*; therefore is never changed. Nor does it come of *our* crucifying the flesh. We are never told to crucify the flesh. We are told to *mortify*, which supposes evil still to exist; it was crucified, that is, *judicially* dealt with, at the cross by Christ, who endured its curse and bore its doom. *But this happy condition of fruit-bearing, and in which sin is in abeyance, comes of our living the life that*

flows into us whilst in communion with Christ; 'as Paul says, "I live; yet not I, *but Christ liveth in me.*" It is not an abiding for salvation, for all Christians *are* saved; it is an abiding for personal holiness, for fruit-bearing—for manifesting the life of Christ which is already in us. This is of immense practical value, as our Lord shows.

First, it is of value to *Him*. The vine has no way of showing its life or its fruit but through the branches; Christ has no way of showing His fulness but through His members; as Paul says of "the church, which is His body, the *fulness* of Him that filleth all in all."

It is of value to us: as He says, "If ye abide in me and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." It is, beloved, whilst joined to Him in communion that He, the blessed Lord, begets prayer in us, the answer to which is *sure*. It is the same as to *joy*; joined to Him, as the tube to the spring, His *joy* flows into us, as He says, "That my joy may remain in you, and that your joy might be full."

The same also as to His love. Moreover, in the power of a conscious communion with Him, whatever we receive *we can* speak of, so “ye shall testify of me.” Hence a single word, spoken whilst the soul is in communion, will have more power than volumes of words when the soul is out of communion. This is the great lack in the present day. How much is being said and done; but, alas! with what little power! and with what little result! Anything that comes of a saint that is not of this abiding in Him, may be counted by *us* as service, or work, but it is *without power*, and *without blessing*, and fit only for the burning.

As to sin,—and, alas! how careless are many believers even, respecting sin,—it is evident, in such abiding in Him, it must be for the time *in abeyance*; though of course the measure of our abidance, even at best, is so low that we must ever fail or fall short of the Divine glory. Oh, the immense importance then, beloved, of true communion—of this true abiding in Jesus! Our thoughts, and words, and actions will be either full

or empty of Christ, as we are, or are not, in communion, and our own true blessedness in the Divine life will correspond with the same.

May not this subject throw light on the professedly difficult text in 1 John iii. 9, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin?" No one who knows himself or the Word can affirm that it means that we are *actually* perfect, intrinsically sinless: some, indeed, have affirmed this to be a Christian *attainment*; but Scripture gives no warrant for it. There is *no such actual attainment*; we are complete *in Christ*; but in no sense else. It is true that the new nature in us (being intrinsically holy) cannot sin; but does that answer to the "whosoever," which implies that it is a *person* whose normal or natural condition as a Christian, is that being born of God he sinneth not? We say his normal condition; for he is supposed by God to be walking *not according to the flesh*, but according to the Spirit; and the walking, like the abiding, ensures a practical denial of sin. For if we walk in the Spirit, we *shall not* fulfil the

lusts of the flesh, we shall not do the *evil* things that we otherwise would ; but shall mortify, deny them. Sin in us will be *subdued*, and its power, practically, will be denied ; the absence of which, in other words, the absence of the walking and the abiding, would leave even Paul himself, *as to service*, like a brand fit only for the burning, or, as He Himself says, “ *a castaway.*” May the Lord, dear friends, give us understanding in this ; for how few, alas ! are living in its knowledge or its power.

Hence the next thing to be considered is as to how the soul is to be in this condition. You are already asking—*How are we to abide ?* It reminds one of the question, How are we to believe ? As believing is simply taking God at His word, so with abiding ; it is taking Christ at His word. We are simply to abide (to *remain*) in Him. “ Let that therefore *remain* in you which ye have heard from the beginning ; if that which ye have heard from the beginning shall *remain* in you, ye also shall continue in the Son and in the Father.”

1 John ii. 24. Beloved, we must simply do this or suffer loss ; of course it is by faith ; for it is by faith we take the place He has given us—by faith it is we are consciously in communion with Him, joined to the Lord, as the branch to the vine. It is this abidance which connects with so much blessing the realisation by faith of our *oneness* with Jesus at the right hand of God. Faith *brings* us into it, and can alone *keep* us in it ; it is sin, unbelief, or disobedience, which at any moment may take us out of it. Our warrant is His blessed word, “Abide in me ;” the same warrant which we had at first for believing is that which we now have for abiding. Beloved, there are two things, as we have seen, consequent upon this abidance.

The first is, that “we sin not,”

The second, that we “bear much fruit.”

The first is simply negative : “*we sin not* ;” for it is whilst the soul is abiding in Christ sin lies in abeyance. It is *subdued*, good as dead ; the easily besetting sin, along with any weight or sense of sorrow or care on the soul, are laid aside. Sin,

however, is still within us, and may at any moment secretly work against faith, against the truth, in fact, against God. But during the precious time the soul is fully abiding in Christ, sin has no dominion over us; the soul buried deep down in the Lord's grace and love, we are dead to sin. All this, though it be only negative, as I have said, is truly much for us to enjoy. We have victory over evil, dominion over sin, not merely on the cross, where sin and our evil nature were condemned and set aside by God, but *in ourselves*, where, whilst we are in communion, the secret working of God is such that, through the blessed Spirit who is in us, with unsinning walk, "we are holy and without blame before Him in love."

But besides the not sinning, there is a more positive consequence of abiding, as described by our Lord in the chapter before us: "If we abide in Him we shall bring forth *much fruit*." Oh! how blessed is it, beloved, for the soul to know this! The branch being in connection with the Vine, its "much fruit" flows into it. The truth

taught is, not that every *Christian* will bring forth much fruit, but that every Christian *abiding in Him* will do so. If we abide in Him, only what is in Him will flow into us. Apply the pipe to pure water, and only pure water will flow through it; apply it to the impure, and the impure will flow into it. Thus, when our souls are applied not to self, or sin, but to *Christ*, only *Christ* will flow into us—blessed fruit! *His* joy, *His* love, and *His* peace, and all else He can communicate. Especially we are to abide in *His* love.

And *His* love to us begets love, our own love to Him. We are to abide in *His* love, that personal, deep, unchanging love of *His*. Abidance, like obedience, is the result of love. “If a man love me,” says Christ, “he will keep my words.” And what love is that in which we are to abide, but that which we first of all at conversion saw and believed? “As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you.” Who can tell the measure of the Father’s love, *His* everlasting, infinite love to *His* Son? Yet such is Christ’s love to us. It is that

love, His own love, in which we are to abide. How do we know this love but by His *words*? He says, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you." By His words, then, we know His love; also His Father's love. Ah! beloved, we had never known the love He hath for us—the love which led Him to die for us; we had never known His present thought of us in having gone to prepare a place for us, or His purpose to come again and take us to Himself, or the glory which is to follow (John xvii.), were it not for His *words*. And the words are but the expression of what His *Person* is; faith in His word is the path through the Spirit by which the soul finds her way into *Himself*. Thus, after all, simple faith in His truth is the thing needed; and hence any truth, such as completeness, oneness, adoption, heirship, glory, apprehended by faith, will give the soul the needed power for abidance; just as faith, apprehending the value of the blood gives the soul the power of salvation; only in each case it is not the truth itself, so much as the fellowship into which it brings

us with the Lord of whom it speaks. O, for such faith ! and O, for such power ! This is what we need, beloved.

And now, further, what a truth is this ! “ If a man love me he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” Mark it well !—“ *We* will come unto Him.” Hence the Father also abides in us ; we know that He was in Him who said, “ He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.” For all the Father is in *Him*—that blessed One, and all this sweet double abidance, beloved, may be in us. How wonderful ! How precious ! Do you understand it ? It comes of *simple obedience*, which obedience comes of *simple love*. For “ He that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in him.”

Moreover, it is our happiness to *know* this. For “ hereby know we that He abideth in us, by His Spirit which He hath given us.” That Spirit is the Spirit of knowledge, by which we know the Father and the Son through the Word. He is the

Spirit of the Son ; so that we have fellowship as the Son with the Father. He is the Spirit of God, by which we know the love God hath to us. But if we walk in darkness (of sin, or ignorance), we may indeed be Christians, but we are not in obedience, and have no fellowship, no abidance ; and as a consequence, we have no practical holiness, or power against sin, and consequently no peace. This is the condition, alas ! of how many at this time who are the children of God.

O, beloved, who can overestimate the importance of all this, especially in relation to our personal holiness. For first it is by abiding in Him that we get a salvation from *the daily power of sin*. Not, as we have shown, from its presence ; for that is still within us—nor from its doom ; *that* has been once taken by Christ alone on the cross, and never needs to be repeated ; but from its power, its dominion over us. Alas ! how many strive after this, but obtain it not because they strive amiss. They are not freed from sin. They are not delivered from its every-day power ; sin has

still mastery over them. It is only by *abiding* in Christ, by remaining in Him, we are distinctly told we shall not sin. It would seem, therefore, that our aim should be, not so much deliverance from this particular sin or that, but simply by faith to *abide* in Him. Living and acting in such abidance, sin lies in abeyance. Thus we see, that when sin seeks to assert its power, with what power to oppose it. Our strength is in *abiding in Him*. We have long since found that our own power is vain—that of the new nature, as well as the old. It is only in Him that we can ensure success. We have no strength of our own, our own fighting has ended only in defeat. Our conquests must be obtained where our salvation is obtained. Our salvation was obtained simply and only in Christ, and unless Christ come into the scene of our conflicts, we are sure of no victory.

This is the great truth taught us for conflict, as well as for salvation, in 1 Sam. xx. So long as the battle was between the Philistines and Israel the people trembled. As long as they and the

enemy were set in battle array against each other they were sore dismayed. But when it was no longer merely *themselves* and the enemy, but *David* and the enemy, Israel, in David, obtained the victory. *David* did it all. He not only levelled the foe at his feet, but *stood* on him, taking off his head with his own weapon. So Christ, using no weapon, but that used by the enemy, *by death* overcame him who had the power of death. But this you will say was for salvation from the doom of sin. Yes, and it must be by the same trusting to David—the same looking to the Lord, to the power and efficacy of that death, by which He died for sin, also to the power of *His resurrection*—that we can have daily victory over its dominion in our ever recurring conflicts with it.

The battle is the Lord's, and He loves to be trusted with our cause. He came to Joshua, and declared Himself as one to fight Israel's battles, saying, "As Captain of the Lord of Hosts am I come." When Israel owned Him as such, what victories! When not (as at Ai), what defeats!

They, at Jericho, simply walked around the city, and allowed the Lord to conquer. They did nothing else. What power it was to them that *the Lord* was engaged for them ! They abode in the thought of *Him*, and our strength, beloved, in conscious weakness, is to do the same, trusting to Him, referring all to Him, and abiding in Him. Ah ! then, were we to do this we should find that the sin which so easily besets would lose its hold, and the temptation which assails us its power, so that we should not sin. Thus, when the enemy comes in like a flood, and inly torments us with his wiles, we should say, "Lord, here is another sin ; I am not able for it—another temptation ; but remaining in Thee, I am learning how Thou alone canst conquer. Undertake for me. The battle is Thine ; the praise is Thine ! "

And just as in salvation at first, I *believed*—for *believing* was mine ; so in conflict, looking off unto Jesus to deliver me from its power, as before He delivered me from its guilt, *I lay aside the sin which so besets me*. I say "*I*," for this again

responsibly is mine. Beloved, do you understand? The sixth of Romans shows that sin before death *had* a claim upon you. But since death for sin has transpired, sin has no claim. He who in Christ is dead, and dead *to sin*, is freed from sin,—doth not, while in abidance, actively sin. Remember, it is *whilst* we are abiding in Him that we sin not; and, moreover, it is whilst we abide in Him that we bear fruit. For from whence the rich grapes on the branches, but through the vine? The riches of the vine flow into the branches. Were they not united to the vine, there would be no fruit. Apart from Him we have nothing; but abiding in Him we are, in our experience, dead unto sin, but alive unto God. His peace, His love, His joy, and His life, all flow into us. This as to our own blessedness. It is the same as to our work for the Lord. If engaged in service, the power, unction, blessing must all come from Him; nay, He Himself will flow forth through the Word; thus, in beholding sinners saved, or saints blest, you will see that it was *the Lord* who was out (so to speak) among them, ac-

cording to that promise, "I, IF I be lifted up, will draw all to me." O how little is there of such service in this age of work and activity; there are journeys many, efforts many, and words many; but how little of the Lord Himself, manifestly in power, drawing into Himself and into God.

And now as to the true scene of all this. The scene of our abidance in Him is simply where He now is, risen and ascended far above all principalities and powers in heavenly places. There, *where He is* before God, *we are*; and as He is, holy, accepted in the Beloved. We are raised and seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. We are in Him *there*. He is in us, our life, our rest, our power *here*. Satan would keep us out of the heavenly places; wicked spirits would keep us out; hence, when at times we fail to realise our place there, and through sin lose our sense of the grace which, notwithstanding, gives us a right to be there, it is hard to regain the true sense we should ever have of the fact that it is our place.

In conclusion, as to this whole truth, what man-

ner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness—what fruitfulness from such a source! what power, what blessings *from the Lord*! And, oh! what rest, what joy! And what setting our affections on “things above,” the effect of which is personal holiness! For just in proportion as we are in the enjoyment of the “things above,” do we “mortify the members which are upon the earth.” And the doing so is not so much a labour or an effort (though we do *mortify*), as it is the simple blessed effect of the enjoyment itself. Is there no room for confession, beloved? Have we ever lived as we ought in the constant power of this abidance? Where, alas! in these days is the “*more fruit*” and the “*much fruit*” from this blessed Vine? And, beloved, let me admonish myself, and you. As for me, truly I am humbled, for in speaking of it even, one is reminded of what another has said when asked that some of his sayings may be published.

“I only grieve to think how little my own attainments have corresponded with the blessed truths I have taught.”

So here, beloved, do I feel on this wondrous,
precious truth of abiding. How does it condemn
one for all those hours and days of life in which its
blessed power has been so little known !

A SONG OF ABIDING.

ABIDE in Thee, in that deep love of Thine,
My Jesus, Lord, Thou Lamb of God divine,
Down, closely down, as living branch with tree,
I would abide, my Lord, my Christ, in Thee,
And Thou in me.

Abide in Thee, my Saviour-God, I know
How love of Thine, so vast, in me may flow,
My empty vessel running o'er with joy,
Now overflows to Thee without alloy,
My best employ.

Abide in Thee, nor doubt, nor self, nor sin
Can e'er prevail with Thy blest life within ;
Joined to Thyself, communing deep, my soul
Knows nought besides its motions to control,
Thou hast my whole.

Abide in Thee, dear hiding-place secure,
 May oft deep purging for my sins ensure,
 But branch, when pruned, is nearest to the hand,
 Though bleeding much, 'tis what Thy love hath planned,
 Shall I withstand ?

Abide in Thee, 'tis thus I inly know
 The *secrets* of *Thy mind* e'en while below,
 All joy and peace, all knowledge of Thy Word,
 All power and fruit in service for the Lord,
 It doth afford.

Abide in Thee, *one life* is mine and Thine ;
 All *fulness* that's in *Thee* is *counted mine*,
 As branch must bear the life-fruit of the tree,
 So thus to show Thyself, Thou needest me,
 As I need Thee.



MUSINGS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

THIS blessed letter of Paul the Apostle to the Ephesians has usually been divided into three parts. It shows:—

1. That all believers are in Christ.
2. That Christ is in all believers, and
3. That as the result He is to be manifested in their lives.

These are the precious truths found more or less embodied in this epistle.

The epistle opens thus: “Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ.” This, you see, speaks of service; but it is most important to bear in mind, that St. Paul was not an apostle first, and a saint afterwards; but first a saint and then an apostle. The

order is not first a servant, then a child. No, beloved; I must be a *child* of God before ever I can become a *servant* of God. If this distinction be clearly held, service will take its right place. We shall not have unconverted, dead souls talking of good works; we shall see that there must be life first, and then service will follow. The apostle goes on: "Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ *by the will* of God." It is His good pleasure not only to have us as His children, but to use us as His servants. He redeemed us, so that we are not only the objects of His love, but His servants to serve Him. We are His special agents whereby He accomplishes His blessed purposes. We forget that *not* our salvation, but *His glory*, is the ultimate end of redemption.

"To the saints which are at Ephesus;" but, happily, the apostle does not end there, but adds, "and to the faithful in Christ Jesus;" so that this epistle, and all the precious truths which it unfolds, is of universal application; wherever there is a faithful soul, there the blessed truth in

this epistle applies ; so that as faithful in Christ Jesus, this letter belongs to us—it is written by the Holy Ghost *for* and to *us*. Let us not forget then that the things of which we are going to speak belong to you and to me. Beloved, we need a more personal application of Christ ; and then, we should have more joy. Oh ! I long, that you may get a glimpse this morning, into the deep ocean of His love—the rich, eternal treasures of His grace, and the privileges provided for us in Christ Jesus, and that you may know, ere we separate ; something of the wondrous position into which you have been raised in the presence of the Father, so that you can do nothing in return but wonder and adore.

Well, dear friends, this verse which we have been looking at is what may be called the *inscription*, and, as I said, it is very important to dwell upon it, that we may feel assured as to the persons to whom this whole letter is addressed—even to all saints—to *all* the faithful in Christ Jesus. In the next verse, we have the *salutation*. And what a

salutation it is ! “ Grace and peace from God our Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ.” And yet some dear Christians are all in doubt as to whether they *have* grace or peace. Do you doubt thus as to an earthly parent ? If your father sent you a message, and prefaced it with a loving greeting, would you have a doubt as to whether or not he loved you, would there be the slightest question in your mind as to your acceptance as his child ? Oh ! beloved, see what a salutation your Father sends you, and what an estimate He has formed of you, when He tells you of the grace and peace He gives you. Oh ! it is not to the well-taught saint, or the advanced spiritually-minded saint only, to whom He sends this blessed salutation ; no, but to each believing one—to all *the faithful in Christ Jesus* ; wherever over the whole globe there is a child of God, there is the Father’s love for him, the Father’s salutation to him, the Father’s grace and peace for him. The blessed Lord, speaking of His disciples—of those whom the Father had given Him, said : “ He that loveth

Me shall be loved of my Father.” Oh ! what an infinite measure of love then flows forth from that heart towards each true believer ; and yet you hear dear saints talking of being afraid to die—talking of having no assurance. What ! no assurance when your Father sends you such a salutation ? What ! afraid to go home when your Father now greets you with *such* a greeting ? Oh ! let us away with such suspicious, such unbelieving fears ; and let us turn and gaze upon the wondrous love—the ineffable grace of our God ! What a salutation it is, bringing this two-fold blessing, “ grace and peace.” We are reminded of the first word of the risen, living Jesus to His disciples, on the resurrection eve : “ Peace be unto you ; ” but this is not only peace from the Lord Jesus, but peace from His Father ; it comes straight from His heart to you, His own child, dearly beloved of His soul. Surely to know it is to *rejoice* in it. Oh ! ye who are His children—ye who are His saints—His beloved ones, do not stand at a distance from Him any longer, as if you had no right to draw near, no

right to the place He has given you, even as nigh to Himself as His own beloved Son ; you see it is grace first, then peace. He first gives you the blessed assurance of the favour in which you are before him ; He first sets your mind at rest, as to any question which might have arisen in your mind (not in *His*) as to your acceptance, and then you have "Peace." Oh ! may my Lord give you perfect rest in the blessed truth of your nearness and preciousness to the Father

And now we come to the scene of all our blessedness, it is IN CHRIST. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." Mark, we are blessed with all spiritual blessings *in Christ*." Christ is the source, centre, and channel of all ; and if you can tell me the measure of blessing with which the Father has blessed His Son, then I will tell you the measure of blessing with which the Father has blessed you. But, in truth, it is immeasurable ;

but remember that the measure of *His* blessing is the measure of *yours*. All spiritual blessings in and with Christ are yours; therefore, no saint of God can say: "I have no blessing; I have no love; I have no knowledge; I have no grace; I have no communion;" for, beloved, as a *child* of God you have *all*; *you* are blessed, not will be, but *are* blessed with all in Christ Jesus—in Him. "All things are yours, for Christ is yours, and ye are Christ's." If you can tell the amount of *His* riches, then may you know what riches are yours; "in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;" and ye are "complete in *Him*," yea are filled out of Him. So that there is not a solitary blessing in Christ with which I am not filled. And oh! with what *are* we filled? Put a vessel into the ocean, and if you can tell me what is in the ocean, I will tell you what is in the vessel; so tell me what is in God, what is His fulness, and you may know what is in you. "But," you say, "I don't know that I am possessed of such blessings, I don't *feel* that I am." *Feel!*

it would be a true statement if you put it thus: "I cannot *feel*, for I do not *know*." You can have no happy sense or experience of those blessings *unless* you *know* that they are yours; but when you see them here—you *know* that they are yours by divine gift. Imagine an infant born into a circle—the heir of a large property. What does it *feel* about the matter? *Nothing*; simply because it *knows* nothing. By and by, he comes *to know* of his vast possession, and along with the *knowledge* comes the sense and *feeling* of what it is. Believe me, beloved, it is vain to look for *feelings*, until you have come to *know* and believe. But here, in this blessed Word, you have it all—boundless wealth made over to you by Divine love and power; and you have but to know it in order to rejoice in it; and as the vast inheritance was the right of the infant because of its relationship to the family, so beloved, these spiritual blessings are the right and privilege of *every* child of God, simply on the ground of the relationship he bears to God. Says the apostle: "Blessed be the God

and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all *spiritual blessings* in Christ Jesus." Israel's blessings were all of a temporal nature; Israel had the land; Israel had many other blessings; but they were of an earthly character; but we have *spiritual* blessings; our blessings are all linked with what is beyond, with what is in Christ; our riches, our glory, our inheritance are all above. Down here, beloved, you and I get what the blessed Lord promised us: "In the world ye shall have *tribulation*;" in the world we get enmity and opposition, for the devil is the prince of this age; the devil will try all his power against our souls, ever seeking to rob us of our peace. But he can never rob us of the riches of our inheritance. All that God has for us is in His Son. O this, beloved, is where He has put us,—down in His own Son. What a place! What a standing! So that I have only to ask what *He is*, to know where *I am*. I have only to ask what is *His* to know what is *mine*. He is son; we are sons. He is heir; we are joint-heirs with

him, "of an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away." And oh wondrous things, beloved, we have spread out before us in the following verses. But, again, I would have you mark how we get them all "in *Him*," and in *Him only*. Out of Him you have none of these blessings. They all come to us in Him who is the eternal Son of the Father; and as we have been in Him from all eternity, we are older than the foundations of the world—as old, as to His purpose, as God. "He hath chosen us in Him"—that is, in Christ—"before the foundation of the world;" chosen, not to be angels—not to be any other intelligences—but to be *in* His Son, and *as* His Son, and to bear the image of His Son; chosen to be ever His delight, His rejoicing; "chosen in Christ, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." And all that is in one single verse, beloved! one verse—but millions upon millions of ages, between the beginning and the end of it. First, The eternal plan and counsel in God's mind; then incarnation, with its wondrous story of the

life, death, resurrection, and ascension of the Son of God ; then ourselves brought into the world, and in due time, brought out of darkness into His marvellous light. But it is *in Christ* we are holy and without blame *before Him in love*.

Such is the wondrous scope of that one verse. Millions of ages, as *we* look at it ; but by God's eye, all seen at a glance. What a wondrous scheme ! And you and I, beloved, are there ! —He has taken us up out of sin, and put us down before Him, in His very presence, without blame before Him in love. “ Ah ! beloved friends, let your mind dwell for a moment on that word of preciousness : God *not blaming* us ! and why ? because sin, the *ground* of blame, has been removed. And now He imputes no blame. The blame has been taken by Christ. Oh ! mystery of mysteries ! God finding an object to love, an object worthy of Himself, in a sinner. He has chosen us to be the objects of His love ; and He has, accordingly, brought us into a condition of perfectness, befitting His love. You know if I seek for an object upon

which to lavish my affections, I must find one in consonance with my position, my rank, and my tastes ; and God, in choosing us, must find us as He has made us, in harmony with Himself, with His own love and character. He has put us into His own perfectness ; into all the height, as to rank, which He required for one who was to be the chief centre of affections. Oh ! beloved, do you know yourselves as such ? Have you thus looked into the perfect law of love, and have you seen yourself, as in that love, from all eternity ? And oh ! have you fellowship with that love ? Do you live in the Father's thought of you ? If you have only looked into the mirror of self, you have seen nothing *but self*, with all its attendant vileness and corruption ; but if you have looked into the glass of God's own purposes and grace, you see *Christ*, and have lost sight of self, and have learnt to know and view yourself as *Christ*. What a beautiful type we have of this in the brazen laver. You remember it was made of the looking-glasses of the women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle. That in which *self*

had been seen was now put away ; hidden, so to speak, by the deep water of the laver. If I have looked upon the Son of God, and have seen how ineffably precious He is in the love of the Father, then if I am taught of the Spirit, I shall see myself to be in the same love. I shall see that in Him *I am* blessed with ALL spiritual blessings in heavenly places ; and I shall see that I *am* chosen in Him unto a special purpose ; and what is that ? Nothing short of this : To be “ holy and without blame before Him in love.” Mark that word “ chosen,” *chosen to be holy* ; hence, practically I should not live in sin.” Oh ! no, beloved ; we are called with an *holy* calling ; we are chosen to be *holy*, for He is holy. All sin has been put away, and upon that ground I have been brought in, and put down *in* and *with* Christ. I am holy *in* Him, and therefore I must manifest a likeness *to* Him, in a *holy* life and walk, blest fruit of His own Spirit ! “ Before Him.” What a word ! An object must be very near to be just *before* you. And the Lord would have His saints ever *before Him*, even

as they are the objects of His delight and care. But the apostle adds another word : “ before Him ; ” in what ? In admiration ? No, though truly He does admire them ; but here it is— “ before Him *in love*,” “ *in love*.” He would have them before Him, so that the full tide of His love may flow into them ; fill them fully, eternally. In the overflow of which they worship Him, and praise, and adore Him. “ Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children,” God would have us to be by emphasis “ *His children*.” God wanted “ *children* ” to sit at His table as sons, to behold the glory of the Son. The prodigal thought to be taken in as a servant ; but the father welcomed him as “ *this my son*.” Observe, God wanted *not* servants. He had myriads of servants. God would have *children* : it was *children* whom He wanted to delight in ; that the very same love which He had given to His Son, should flow forth to them. “ Oh,” you say, “ but I’m not worthy.” Then look again at the last clause of this verse, where it says, “ According to the good pleasure of

His will." He has done all this, not for any merit or worthiness in the sinner ; but because it *pleased Him*. Rob God of a sinner, and you rob Him of that which is *His pleasure*. And because this was His good pleasure, no hardness, no rebellion, no failure on the sinner's part, could prevent its accomplishment ; God was bent upon the salvation of the sinner because it was His good pleasure. Only imagine, beloved, our salvation is God's *good pleasure*. The work of creation was His pleasure ; but that which is *His good pleasure* by emphasis, is the bringing in of such as you and me out of our lost condition, and raising us into the life, and rank, and dignity of His own Son. It was the *pleasure* of the shepherd to seek the lost sheep ; it was the *pleasure* of the woman to look for her lost piece of silver ; but, notice, we get something more in this parable of the woman and the money ; here we have *the light shining upon, and being reflected by the silver* ; and when the light of God's truth shines upon a soul, it discovers that soul. The money was found only through the action of the light

upon it; the light was never reflected by the dust and rubbish upon which it fell. The silver *alone* reflected the light. And one great result of the entrance of the light into a soul, is, not only that the soul sees the light, but that the soul then gives back the light—shines *in* the light, to the glory of Him who is the source of the light; and it is His good pleasure that we should shine in the light of the fulness of His love for ever and ever.

And all this “to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved.” “IN the Beloved;” you see how again and again it is all *in Him*; we get nothing outside of Him. “*In Him*” we are accepted; “*in Him*” the Father is well pleased with us; and if the delight of the Father centres in His Son, then it follows that His delight centres also in us who are in His Son. Oh! how different is all this to the experience of a soul who is toiling, labouring for acceptance. Where is the need of labouring for that which is ours as a *gift*? Why seek *to be* accepted, when the Father tells you that

you *are* accepted. But mark again that little word "*in*"—it is most important. It is because we are "*in the Beloved*," that we *are* accepted. "But," says one, "I don't know whether *I am* accepted." Why, beloved, here it is; if you are saved at all, you are accepted. Every saved soul is an accepted soul—"accepted in the Beloved"—accepted by God—in the Beloved. But more yet—

"Wherein He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ." Again, it is all "*in Christ*;" "both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him: in whom *we* also have obtained an inheritance." Now look at the remarkable truth which hangs upon this little word—"we." Paul says: "In whom also *we* have obtained an inheritance;" that is, we Jews—we who *were* Jews, but now are in the church; which is Christ's body—*we*

also have obtained an inheritance. It is not of himself as a portion of Judaism, that the apostle is here speaking ; but something quite distinct from Judaism in the past, and from Millennium in the future ; something too, distinct from Gentilism as such ; for in the 13th verse, he refers to the Gentile converts as “ *ye* ;” but here it is “ *we*,” —“ *we poor Jews, who were strangers to all this, have been brought into the wondrous mystery of the body and of the inheritance.*” So that now there is neither Jew nor Gentile as such ; but a new creation, of which Christ is the head, each member of which, as to acceptance and glory, being “ *as He is.*”

And therefore, we shall reign with Him, and sit down upon His own throne with Him ; and as He is soon coming in the glory, we shall share the glory also with Him ; for “ *when Christ, who is our life, shall appear,*” we “ *shall also appear with Him in glory.*”

“ *That in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things*

in Christ." That gathering is not yet come: all things are not yet gathered up into one head: but now He is gathering out His members—His body is becoming complete. From Gentile lands, and from the despised people of Israel, God is gathering out these precious ones. The apostle has it here. First, "in whom *we* have obtained an inheritance;" and then he adds: "in whom *ye* also trusted;" you see the change of language, from the "*we*" to the "*ye*." And if you will look into it, you will notice that throughout the whole epistle, the use of the "*we*" or "*ye*" is most significant.

"In whom *ye* also trusted, after that *ye* heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation." How did these Gentiles go into all this position, and rank, and glory? This is important, because in the very same way, you and I get into it too. Was it by frames or by feelings? Was it by natural birth? Clearly not. For in the very next chapter, the apostle reminds them that by nature they were children of wrath, even as others.

Says Paul: "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye"—what? "After that ye *felt* that ye were saved"—was it so, beloved? "After that ye had *laboured* to get saved"—was that it? Or, "after that ye had had some mysterious revelation?" Oh! no, indeed; it was in no such way that these Ephesian sinners got into this grace; for, says Paul, most distinctly, "in whom ye also trusted, after that ye *heard*—after that ye *heard* the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation." But how did they hear, but by the gospel? And how, and where are we to hear the word of truth, but in this blessed book. Like the child who comes and exclaims: "I have had a letter from my father, who tells me that I am worth £10,000."

How did that child get to know his wealth? By feeling it? or by dreaming of it? No, but by the word of the father. Says the Holy Ghost: "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye *heard the word of truth.*" The word of truth is *as God*; whom on hearing we believe. And, believe me, faith never comes in any other way; you will

never get faith by working, or by weeping, or by praying, or by groaning. Oh! no, indeed; all your groaning will never put you into faith; you can only come into it by hearing. We were all born children of wrath, but hearing God, by believing--(if we *have* truly believed in Jesus) we have been made children of God; and "faith cometh by *hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.*" And every one who has heard and believed, even the weakest believer, is born of God, and as one of the family of God, possesses all this divine standing before God of which I have been speaking. But we do not yet know what riches are ours. For, even believers are trying to live on themselves, instead of on their inheritance in Christ, with whom they are joint-heirs.

But let us look a step further. "In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." "In whom also after that ye believed." The Greek is: "In whom also *on believing* ye were sealed." I believe that a soul may be quickened without being sealed; but

there is no such thing as a soul really *believing* what it has in Christ, without being sealed. You see how Paul (Acts x. 43-44) by the Holy Ghost puts it,—that every *believing* soul, in the very first exercise of faith in Jesus, is immediately a *sealed* soul. There is no room here for the quarantine of law exercises through which some would fain make a soul to pass, teaching him that he has no right to be happy, until he has been miserable. But do I therefore make light of sin, because I speak thus? do I set aside sorrow for sin? Oh! indeed no; for the holier the believer gets, the more abominable will sin appear. The rags in which the prodigal returned, never appeared so loathsome as when he was sitting apparelled in the best robe at his father's table; without any imputing of wrong to him, they were taken from him by grace. But, beloved, *when* is the believer sealed? I reply as Paul states: he is sealed the moment he believes on the Lord Jesus Christ. Believing the truth which the letter contained, the child had *immediate* assurance as to the property. And

when the soul comes to know that God is reconciled, and that He *does* embrace the sinner, that moment the truth is *in* the soul, and along with the truth, and by the truth, the Holy Ghost enters the soul. *I* can but put the truth before the soul. God alone can give it entrance, and by it, or along with it, the Spirit enters the soul. Beloved, if you can truly say: "Jesus is MINE," then *are* you sealed. For none but the Holy Ghost, through the Word, *could* give you that assurance. Moreover, He Himself *is the seal*; "sealed by that Holy Spirit of promise." The Holy Ghost in your soul is both the Sealer and the seal. Some people maintain that the *sealing* does not take place until long after the soul is *quicken*ed; this *may* possibly be the case, but it ought not; unbelief is regarded as *sin* in the Word; and there is no true sealing until the Holy Ghost shows the soul Jesus, and until the soul, by hearing and believing the record, enters into peace. But where do we find in the Word, the necessity for long years of anxious doubt and of waiting? Every

anxious soul has a title on believing to immediate rest in Christ, *therefore* to immediate sealing.

And now, what more are we told of this blessed Spirit of promise? Says the apostle: "Which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession." If I purchase a property, and at once lay down a certain sum in part-payment of the debt, that money is an earnest that I shall by-and-by pay the whole sum. So, beloved, I have an immense inheritance—it is being reserved for me by God; but *meanwhile* He gives me the earnest of the full possession of that inheritance, and that earnest is the Holy Ghost; He dwells *in* the soul, revealing by the way the glories of the inheritance, and tells me of Him with whom I am soon to share it. Oh! beloved, this is a matter not to be talked of merely or known, but to be realized. And what now do *you* know of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in your soul? Is it with you a blessed, present reality, which you constantly enjoy? Do we realize that our bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost? If so, "what

manner of persons ought we to be?" And now we must pause here for a little. We have been meditating, beloved, upon our *eternal condition in Christ* ; we are next to consider that Christ is *in us*.

But before doing so, let me dwell on this condition of ours a little longer.

"An overmuch handling of a scripture," as another has said, "may brush off its sweet and fresh bloom;" but over this scripture, beloved ones, who can dwell too much, or taste too much the sweetness and preciousness of its fruit—fruit older than the heavens—fruit found by God, *in Himself and for Himself* from all eternity? But ONE object could draw out all the delight of His nature. But ONE object could be sufficient to uphold and preserve that delight. But ONE object could satisfy or fully respond to that delight. That one object was CHRIST.

God could not approve of what was not perfect. He could not lavish His love on what was not in agreement with Himself. Blessed are His ways thus, in respect of us. He has all in agreement

with Himself in Christ. And He makes us the same in Him. He has made us, who in ourselves are poor lost sinners, all He could desire for His affections, all He could desire for His praise.

Hence, beloved, the six remarkable “accordings” in this one chapter.

Are we “blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ?” it is *according not to anything in us*, but as He hath chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world. Chosen never to be disendowed.

Are we “predestinated unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself?” it is all *according* to the good pleasure of His will.

If we have “redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins,” it is *according* not to us, *but* to the riches of His grace.

If He has “made known to us the mystery of His will, that in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ;” it is all *according* to His good pleasure. He loved—was *pleased*—to have it so.

Are we “predestinated that we should be for the praise of His glory who first trusted in Christ,” it is *according* to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will. If we are to “*know*” what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saint; and what the exceeding greatness of His power towards us who believe, it is all *according* to His mighty power which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places. The same power which wrought in Him, and which raised Him from the dead, from the tomb in which He was laid in death, far above all angels, powers, principalities, dominions—has wrought in us, associating us with Him, so that we, as He, and in Him, are raised together to the same height—seated together in heavenly places.

Wonderful ! and what I want to remind you of here is, that all these things are absolute. None of them are on your part attainments. And they

are all of grace ; so that you have no claim on God for any one of them. They are all yours independently of any merit or value of your own. God found them in Himself through Christ, before the foundation of the world.

And they are all true of the very youngest or weakest saints. Thousands have gone into heaven who did not know them as they ought ; but that has made no difference. They belong to *the church*, which as Paul shows in this epistle is the completeness or the complement of Christ ; just as in Colossians, Christ is shown to be the completeness or the complement of the church. In the one (Ephesians) the church, as the body, is the theme, in the other (Colossians), Christ is treated of as Head ; together they form the mystery—the one new man—the new creation. Christ and His church are one—Christ is the Head, and His church “members together of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.”

We will now pass over the second chapter, which is a working out as to detail of the truths

of these thirteen verses. But the condition in which we, in ourselves, were, was that of "dead in trespasses and sins." That which shows us our highest in Christ, displays our lowest as to ourselves. The stench and corruption of *dead in sins*, is the true description of us. We are not only dead *by* sin, dead as we would say *by* fever, or *by* cholera ; but were lying dead, corrupt, *in* sins, as we should say dead *in* fever, *in* cholera ; so God finds us in ourselves. This is the first true glimpse which we get of what we are, and the first true condition which we accept as ours when God opens our blind eyes and shows us what we are, as lost, dead, corrupt, in His sight.

It is this condition of ours which Christ takes to the cross. He bears its guilt, endures its shame, atones for it, and then leaves it as for ever in death, or nails it as done with for ever, as before God, on the cross. But though thus dead, helpless, lost, hopeless in ourselves, *we are quickened*. Not only morally made alive, which we are ; but in God's thought, when the Head was raised from the dead,

those who are in His calling, are quickened and raised up together *in Him*. Christ's death is the end of the old condition. His resurrection the beginning of the new. We who believe are on the risen side of His grave. When He said, "*It is finished*," sin, death, Satan, all received their end as to being any obstacles to our salvation. He died because of our sins. He was raised because we were (on His having died for us) justified. And now if the Head be raised, those who are members of that Head, are raised likewise. If He be in heavenly places, they have place in Him there likewise. Many, alas, know *Christ's* resurrection, but they do not see *their own* resurrection. This is a blessed truth, that *now* in heaven, we are as He is—justified, righteous, holy, accepted as He. The result of this is, that the church so saved, will, as the elect mirror of the Divine workmanship, show forth to all other beings, and eternally, the exceeding riches of God's grace.

But as I have said, we will pass over this chapter, and will go on to the 13th verse of chapter iii.,

where we notice quite a different style introduced.

“Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory ;” and at verse 17, “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.”

Here the apostle is speaking of CHRIST IN THE BELIEVER ; before he had been dwelling on the believer in Christ. He says, “That Christ *may dwell* in your hearts by faith.” Oh ! wonderful words. I can understand, in some measure, how the soul can dwell in Christ—how God can bring me into Himself. I can understand, though but feebly, how this finite existence or subsistence of mine can abide in the infinite love and grace of God in Christ. But it is something beyond all this, the infinite grace and love abiding in *me* !

Oh, marvel of marvels is this—Christ in *me*!—Christ formed in *me*! that He may shine out *by me*! He is the one Person, the one blessed object enshrined in the heart of a child of God.

Thus when Paul, at his conversion, was overcome by His glory, the power and image of it never left him. He saw Him; he loved Him, and the object of his love was now in Him—in his affections; dwelling in Him. Thus is it by faith with every true child of God. His deep love to us has made Him dear to our love. Oh! you could not know of any person that he loved you, and that you loved him, without his being in your heart; and however separated or far removed, you would carry him with you, and he would dwell in your heart. Just such an object is Jesus to the believer. He is the Person around whom all the fibres of his affections are entwined. Blessed Person! Blessed object! Just such a one as our hearts need, and without whom we may say that they have no true object for their affections.

And now notice the means by which Christ thus dwells in us. It is not by feeling ; but “ by faith.” Well ; do I believe this letter to the Ephesians ? Do I believe that it is written to me ? Ah, dear friends, all is of faith in God’s Word ; like the child who believed in her possession because of the word of her father, so we believe in the Word of our God. The apostle goes on to add—

“That ye may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height.” Many connect this passage with the one following, “And to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.” No ; the height, and depth, and length, and breadth, refer to that of which we have been speaking—love, namely, that we are to be “rooted and grounded in love”—*love itself*. “God is love.”

“Rooted and grounded” are two similes drawn from horticulture and architecture ; like the plant that spreads its ramifying roots deep down in the soil, or like the noble structure resting upon its deep and solid foundation. So the believer is to

be rooted in, and built upon, and to dwell in this blessed love.

Often we talk of Christians being "built up;" but we cannot be built up until we are built upon something; and the believer is built upon this love. He is saved on the love of God. It is God that never loved His Son apart from His church. Hence, beloved, who can separate? What breadth of love is there in Him! Love broad enough to take in every saint of every age. Wherever there is a living soul, there this love travels and extends its embrace. And then as to the *length* of this love. How long has it been spreading forth its mighty stream? Who can tell *how* long, since before the foundation of the world it made choice of us in Christ? How long? Why, it is as old as God in the past, and extends to all the endless ages of the future. And then, as to its *depth*, who can fathom it? Ah! one would like to know something of the depths into which the love of God in Christ descended. The love of God went down deeper than unfallen Adam; for the blessed

Lord became a *servant* ; whereas Adam was as a son in Eden. And it went down deeper there. We speak it with reverence, the blessed Lord, in dying, went down deeper than the deepest depths of sin and death. “ All the billows and waves are gone over me.” “ I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing ; I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me.” Oh what love ! which led Him to endure such a depth, and amidst such a separation of His soul from God ! It was when His soul was made an offering for sin, that He cried, “ My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me ? ” Such, beloved, the depth. As to the heights, having come down into all our depths, and having emptied them of all the sin and hell which they contained for us, He, Christ, has gone up above all heights—above all circles of angels, principalities, and powers ; gone up to the throne of God.

There is the height, beloved ; do you comprehend it ? Now here we have the end of the sentence about the love. But then the Apostle “ adds, And to know the love of Christ which

passeth knowledge." "The love of Christ which passeth knowledge." What a lovely contradiction ! "To *know* the love of Christ," and yet it "*passeth knowledge* !" Ah, beloved, that will be our eternal heaven, to know what never can be fully known, even through timeless ages. But more, and oh, what words again ! "That ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." Then you can never say that you have, and can have nothing—that you are only a poor, miserable sinner. What ! when we are "filled with *all* the fulness of God ?" Neither are you an *angel*, for angels even are immeasurably distanced by redeemed sinners, who are exalted to partake of such a fulness. They are not sons ; they are not joint-heirs with Christ.

"Angels ne'er share in this,
They are not one with Thee ;
 They have a bright angelic bliss,
 But *life of God* have we.
 Oh ! vast eternal love,
 And grace beyond degree !
 That, Lord, Thy church, below, above,
 Should thus be one with Thee."

And now, beloved friends, we have looked at *two* divisions of this epistle—the believer in Christ, and Christ in the believer. Now let us glance a little at the third. “*Christ in our lives.*” Christ is not only to be *in you* ; but He is to be *seen in you*, to be *manifested in your lives*. You have been taken out of the old standing in Adam, as not now belonging to him, or to his corrupt, condemned house, and put into the new standing which you have in Christ. “But ye put off the old man, which is corrupt, and that ye put on the new man which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness.” Morally, all the things according to the old condition in Adam, are to be laid aside, or, as Paul says, to be “*put off.*” He enumerates some of these. Lying belongs to the old man ; anger belongs to the old man ; giving place or room again to Satan, belongs to him ; stealing belongs to him ; the Spirit of God dwelling in us, if working unhindered, repels, in us, the slightest approval to any of these.

In the 25th to 29th verses, he goes into detail

thus, as to the putting off and putting on, until he comes to the 4th verse of chapter iv., where he says, "Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient, but rather giving of thanks." And again at the 19th verse : "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord ; giving thanks always for all things, unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ ; submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God." Alas ! these things that the apostle here enjoins, are the very things which, for the most part, we do *not* see now ; we do *not* see believers submitting themselves one to another ; we do not see the absence of foolish talking ; but we see in this poor age, in which our minds are so light and trifling, many who are marked by a poor low spirit of levity unchecked, and a tone of conversation fit only for the empty and the foolish. Nothing seems more sad, than to see a Christian indulging in a Christless conversation, or cherish-

ing a volatile spirit. Same as to other sins—such as untruthfulness and an irascible temper; we may be righteously angry, but we *may not* give way to temper. Are Christians sufficiently alive to this last named evil? Are they sufficiently guarded and watchful? The calmest water may be disturbed by the very smallest pebble being thrown into it; and so the most peaceful Christian, unless on the guard, may be thrown into an exhibition of the flesh, as to the temper, by the slightest thing. A word, or a look, or an unexpected reproof, may change the whole spirit from being restful, gracious and happy, into a condition of an unholy denial of the Spirit of Him who, when He was reviled, reviled not again, and when he suffered He threatened not.

There is nothing which so easily puts a soul out of communion as unwatchfulness regarding the every-day little occurrences of life. Greater things are guarded against—fenced off by special prayerfulness. It is the little foxes which spoil the vines. They have no hindrance to *their* approach. They

get in between the fence-work and take away the grapes. Ah ! beloved, there was only *One* who never was unguarded. It is His perfectness we would copy. We must put on Christ, beloved, and so “ put on the *new man* which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness.” And be renewed in the spirit of our minds. Oh, beloved, if it were so, what a development of the life of Christ who is in us. What a correspondence between what we *have* in Him, and what we *are* before the world. How lovely His likeness seen in us ; His Spirit known and read in us ; His communion with His Father through the Spirit of the Son in us, seen in the full blessedness of ours. It is walking and living thus that we put on Christ. And we get as the result, what the law never could give us. The law could not make us holy. The law could only condemn us. But now putting on Christ, abiding in Him, we have dominion over sin, and “ the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

And now there follows upon all this *the warfare*, which is treated of in the last chapter. In the 10th verse, the apostle writes, "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might." It is only in Him we can be strong. All other strength is utter weakness. One word of His, is power; yea, what power was it to the blessed Lord Himself when God said to Him, "Thou *art* My Son;" and to us, when on believing in Christ He says, "Thou shalt be *saved*." It is all in *God*, beloved; it is His *word* revealed to us through His Spirit. What made Joshua strong, was *God* saying to him, "*I* will be with thee; *I* will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. *Be strong* and of good courage;" and again, "Only be thou strong and very courageous." . . "Have not *I* commanded thee?" Strange that we should ever be weak with such a God, and with such a word as that which He gives us for our confidence.

It is God, His Word, which we must use against the enemy of our souls. Hence the armour here is called "the armour of *God*." "Put on the

whole armour of *God*, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." Nothing but God can be a set off against the wiles of the devil. Present *yourselves* to him and you are beaten down in the struggle. For tried by *our* love, or *our* ways, we are lost. Tried by *God*, who is for us, who, notwithstanding our sins, has saved us, and we are more than conquerors. Hence the shield of faith which we lift, what is it? What but the true object of faith, which is God. He it is we lift up against the wiles of the enemy. The "righteousness" too is the righteousness of *God*. The peace is the peace of *God*. The truth is the truth of *God*. It is in the armour of God, in the power of God, in which we are to stand.

You will remark, we are not called to "*stand*" until we have been "*seated*"—until we have first been put down in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, as in chapter ii. It is not—the warrior first and the child afterwards; not—to fight first and then to sit down; the Divine order is just the reverse of all this. We are taken up, and put down in

Christ, in perfectness and acceptance, and then we are bidden to fight. It rather reminds one of the scene when the blessed Lord fed the multitude; but ere He distributed the bread and the fish, He commanded that all should be seated on the green grass ere they eat. He would have us to be at perfect *rest*, whether we fight or feast. Never forget that you are not called to stand and fight, until you have *first* been seated with Christ; the order is first, in Christ, and next Christ in us; for indeed, until then you cannot fight.

And now, beloved, what more would we say? Blessed truths are there in this epistle, on which we cannot now speak. The burden of it is, the church as the body of Christ. What we have spoken rather relates to us as individuals, and bears on what is personal and practical.

One other thing more I would specially notice. Having unfolded all this grace and blessedness, the Holy Ghost bids us *to stand in it*. As if He would teach us that we cannot get higher than the place which God has given us—that beyond

all this, our having been *in* Christ and Christ in us, there is nothing. What we have to do, is to STAND in the position which has been given to us—to continue in the truths which have been unfolded to us, and to find fresh and increasing power in the enjoyment of them. “Having done all, to stand.” Nothing else! There need be no anxious grasping after some imaginary heights.

The apostle seems to say, “Only stand firmly in the enjoyment and practical exposition of what you have.” Thus, beloved, we have in this epistle, the beginning and the end. The beginning—“dead in trespasses and sins;” but when we were dead, He hath quickened us, and raised us up together with Him out of death; sin therefore, with its curse and doom, is all overpast; for when I died with Christ, the law had its course, and there was the end. Such is our condition *judicially* as to sin; but by nature we are children of wrath—we are *dead*. A more helpless condition there cannot be; and that condition was ours; but He hath quickened us out of it, and has now

made us alive unto God. And why all this wondrous display of grace and love? "That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness towards us"—that in the coming ages we might be the mirror in which all His grace should be eternally reflected. The church is one of three special ways by means of which God has revealed Himself. First, Christ when here revealed the Father. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." Second, In His absence the Holy Ghost reveals the Son, who reveals the Father. "He shall testify of Me." Third, The church (the whole mystery of which we have in this epistle) after all dispensations have come to their close, the whole universe will see IN US "*the exceeding riches of His grace.*" One hardly knows how to put such truth into words. We can only wonder and adore; so amazed are we with the very thought. And now, beloved, we are going hence—let us remember that we are to be witnesses for Jesus; and in order to this, we must take all these blessed truths to ourselves, we

cannot afford to dispense with any one truth. And as a believer, say now, "I must take care of myself;" I belong to another—a wondrous Person is that other, who has called me with an holy calling—One who died to own me, who had me in His love from all eternity. Who has gone away for "a little while," and who, in that absence, has taken me up where He is, and who bids me to manifest *His life* while we are here. He has lifted me up in a Divine right, into the Divine presence, in Divine perfectness. And now, because of all this, we must do or be nothing that would bring us under the power of former habitudes in which, in the days of our unconversion, we walked. Oh, may we separate this morning, beloved, with a truer sense of what we are—how blessed, how privileged—and at the same time with a deeper sense of our responsibility to be *like Him* in walk, and ways, and conversation; ever remembering, that above and beyond all this scene of conflict, we have that brightly-gleaming hope: "When Christ, our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear

with Him in glory!" . What a present height !
What a future prospect !

To sum up all practically, as in Colossians iii., "If," or more correctly rendered, "since ye then be *risen with Christ*, set your affections on things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God ; for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life shall appear, ye also shall appear with Him in glory. Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth."

1. Ye *have died*. 2. Ye are to *put to death*.

We *have*, on the cross, died to *sin*—to the *world*—to *self*—and to *law*, all in connection with Him. He did it all. He suffered all. "He died unto sin once." He, Christ, bearing our sin, was forsaken of God, that we might never be forsaken. We may enter into the *shadow* of the cross, and have a little Gethsemane of our own, as to "My God;" but never as to "Why hast Thou forsaken me?" for He hath said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." We may cry, "My God, I am poor;"

“My God, I am a widow;” “My God, I am afflicted;” “My God, I am an orphan;” or “My God, I am sorely tried;” but never can we say, “Thou hast forsaken me.”

“*In darkest shades*, if *THOU* appear,
My dawning is begun.”

Christ was forsaken by God, because He was bearing our sin. “He died unto sin once;” completely and for ever putting it away. This, beloved, takes all romanism, phariseeism, and religiousism completely out of us. We are either in *self*—an unchanged unsanctified sinner; or judicially for ever free from sin by the death of Christ.

“I am *crucified* with Christ.” I used to be told crucifixion is a lingering death; and that we, in crucifying sin, should do it by degrees; but this will not do. There is not a single passage in the Word which tells a Christian to *crucify himself*. Crucifixion, as another has said, is of all deaths just the one which a man could never inflict on himself. He could not nail *himself* to the tree. Our condition before God is that we *have been cru-*

cified with Christ. We need therefore to die no more. Death for sin is over and gone. Death for sin, atonement for sin, judgment on sin, are all *finished*.

What we are told to do is to *mortify* the members which are upon the earth—to be dead morally, to sin, to the flesh, and to the world which crucified Christ. Hence, beloved, our own holiness, or in other words, our *own* death to the world and sin, morally. We are to know a *continual* death to them; not so much by effort of our own against them, but by living in the power of *Christ's* death and resurrection. Living in full association with Christ risen, I am not of the world, but am “kept from the evil,” having victory over it. How widely different is all this from any endeavour to be sanctified through our own sufferings, or our own self-inflicted mortification. It is fellowship with *His* sufferings, *His* death, and living in the power of our risen life in Him. For in resurrection we are linked in with Christ's completeness—invested with all His perfections.

It is on the *principle* of resurrection, that we, in Christ, are transmitted into a new house, and are to live up to our privileges therein ; and must bear in constant remembrance that we are called to uphold the honour of the house, and walk so as not to lower its dignity. You may talk about being in heavenly places ; but this is the *order of the house there*, to walk as Christ walked. It is being occupied with Him and not with ourselves, that we have peace and holiness, rest—rest of conscience and rest of heart. Beloved, may the Lord teach you ; may His peace, “ the peace of God,” as the word signifies, “ *preside* in your hearts ;” blessed president ! and the GOD OF PEACE “ *shall keep* your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ our Lord.” The Lord bless you, beloved. May God bless you.

INSIDE THE VAIL.

Hebrews x.

NO spot, no blemish now,
Unblameable in love,
Are we whose sins can ne'er ascend
Where Jesus is above ;
There, Lamb divine, once slain, Thy precious blood
Hath perfect made our souls as worshippers with God.

O holiest place within !
Where God in Christ is known,—
His perfect love which casts out fear,
So blessed, at His throne.
We've boldly entered there thro' Christ's own blood,
By which our souls are brought for ever into God.

No conscience there of sin,
No sense of guilt or shame,
Once purged by Jesus, we are saved
For ever, through His name.
Far more than conquerors' victory we gain,
We need no other death, we have no other stain.

H

No tears—no griefs are there
Of old creation's groan,
Earth's sorrows are not counted where
Purged worshippers have come ;
No night is there—but glory's brightest ray
Unveiled doth spread around its everlasting day.

All glory to our God,
For His own Spirit given,
To show the value of His blood,
Which brings us into heaven,
Sweet Witnesser ! to write our minds within,
This covenant of God—this writ of cancelled sin.

ON
THE BELIEVER'S STANDING
AS TO
SANCTIFICATION.

AND now, beloved, many of you believers are awakened and anxious, and I want to add a few words on the subject of sanctification. Some believers seem to think, that whilst their justification is by Jesus alone, their sanctification springs in some way or other from themselves. But the blessed truth of God is, that, for my standing before God, Jesus is not only my righteousness, but my holiness; not less my sanctification than my justification. If I look into a mirror, I see myself; but if I look in the glass of the Word—the perfect law of liberty—I see *Christ*. And what He is in

holiness and completeness before God, I am. One with Him, I am as He is. This is my standing before God.

On the ground of Christ it is that He sees me as holy—sanctified. I never shall get to heaven on the ground of my growing sanctification, that is, on the ground of any growth or improvement in my own life or character; and for this simple reason, in order to appear in God's presence, I need an infinite perfectness, and this I can find nowhere but in Jesus. In Him I get *all* that I can possibly need, or that God can require. I need to be perfect, and Jesus is my perfectness; I need to be righteous, and Jesus is my righteousness, a perfectness, a righteousness which puts me in the very presence of divine holiness. This I get in Christ. Not only the live coal applied, saying, "*Thine iniquity* is purged;" but in Christ I am far more than simply purged. I am all that God's utmost need required in order to be in His own blessed presence for ever.

"What a sweet exchange!" exclaims Ralph

Erskine ; “ God hath made Him to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God *in Him.*” And therefore, since He has been made *sin*, I am made *righteousness*. Yes, the very “righteousness of God.” Thus it is no longer me, or my sins, or self, but Christ, which God sees. Hence God’s own rest in, and joy over, every saved sinner. When in heaven, there will be nothing in me contrary to God ; and while down here there is nothing that God requires that I do not find in Jesus. “ Ye are complete in Him.” As I have often said, the believer has, in Christ, a divine casket ; and in it he finds four jewels of inestimable value, “ wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.”

The first of these is *wisdom* ; and truly, beloved, Christ is God’s wisdom. He is the wisdom by which He saved the sinner, and by which He glorifies Himself thereby. And when I see this, that Christ is God’s wisdom, I am personally wise unto salvation. Thus practically I have divine wisdom, divine knowledge in Jesus ; it is not naturally intuitive in me. Just as the gas in this

hall does not belong to the building, but comes in its long history from ages upon ages ago; so, beloved, the light and knowledge of a regenerated soul are not inborn, not its own, but have their source and fountain in God. For when I have the knowledge of God, I have that in me which has been in God from all eternity; and having Christ, I have the wisdom of God.

And then, not only have I wisdom; but I have been made the *righteousness* of God. Yea, I *am* the righteousness of God. Being one with Christ, I stand not on my own footing, but on Christ; in everything except His own primal glory, I am "as He is." Has He died for sins, and are sins gone from Him? I too have died in Him, and sins are gone from me: that is, judicially they are gone. Is He complete—accepted? So am I. Is He perfect—spotless? So also am I. Is He heir? So am I, a joint-heir with Him. Is He Son? So am I; for because the Father would bring us in as heirs together with His own Son, therefore He makes us sons. Is the Lord Jesus bye and bye to

come in glory? I shall come with Him. Will He reign? I shall reign with Him. Will He judge? I also shall judge along with Him.

And when, beloved, in all this I say *I*, I speak for *every believing sinner*. And oh, what makes it perfectly consistent with all that is in God, that we should be such as I have described, is that God has made us in Christ the righteousness that He found for us in Himself. And, beloved, from our natural state of death in Adam to this wondrous position of grace in Christ, it is but *one step*. You see this rail; well, as a sinner not accepted, but under wrath and condemnation, I am **THERE**, on that side; but the instant that I believe in Jesus, I step right over on the other side. I am *in Christ*. Do you ask, "How am I to take this step? Just by knowing the truth, just by seeing it." The Holy Ghost makes it a blessed reality to the soul through the truth. Oh! that you may be able to say, "I rose this morning a man in nature only;" *now* I am "a man in Christ"—I was a poor sinner, and nothing else; but now, as Christ is before God,

so am I. Do you understand it, beloved? Oh, I would not have you to raise the question of *believing*. Do not stumble at the inquiry, *how* am I to believe? The beauty of perfect vision is not to raise the question of seeing, and the beauty of faith is not to raise the question of believing. I look without even thinking of my eyes. I believe without thinking of faith, and the moment I believe I have all.

The mere touch of faith on Christ makes all Christ to be mine—all that He is and has. Ask each one for himself: When I see the standing which in grace God gives the believer—when I see that it is God who has wanted me, and who has provided all for me in Christ, what obstacle is there to my enjoying that standing. In the Colossian church there were Christians only a few days old, as well as some, doubtless, as old as Pentecost; yet, in writing to them, the apostle makes no distinction, but says of all of them, “*Ye are complete in Him.*” Neither the dying thief, but yesterday a blasphemer on the verge of hell, nor Paul, who had long

known the Lord, could be *complete* in any other way. Nor could the one or the other ever enter heaven upon the ground of their own personal holiness, however great ; but in virtue of their Christ. And oh ! as to the last precious jewel in this divine casket, viz., full and completed *redemption*. What a glorious future gleams before us ! our daydawn is breaking, our next meeting may be according to that word of His in John : “ I will come again and receive you unto myself.” What a sight it will be when you and I first look upon Him, face to face and eye to eye. I believe that the moment when we shall become transfigured into Christ’s own glorious likeness, the likeness of His own glorious body—for not till then can we have complete redemption—will be the moment, and what a moment ! when *we first see Him*. Yes, the very moment we see Him, in the twinkling of an eye. We may sometimes think, “ I wonder if Mary, or John, or Moses will be there, and if I shall recognize them.” But oh ! no, beloved ; we shall have, as it were (you understand), no leisure for ourselves,

or for them either ; we shall have no eye but for *Him*, no thought but of gazing on and on, upon *Him*—upon *His* face, *His* glory, *His* beauty.

“ Him eye to eye we then shall see,
Our face like His shall shine.”

I need not open that other question, that of *our own personal holiness*, which is not absolute, or perfect, but progressive, and is that which should form our lives before men : our standing is “ as Christ.” We are to *be* “ holy, for He is holy,” without which holiness, though saved, I could have no true fellowship with God, and possess no real power in service ; nor could others ever know me to *be* a Christian. Such holiness is enjoined upon us in such words as these :—“ The God of peace sanctify you *wholly*,” 1 Thess. v. 3 ; and again, in Heb. xii. 14, where we are exhorted to “ *follow after holiness*,” and the words of the Lord, “ Sanctify them through Thy truth, Thy word is truth.” Such holiness, beloved, is not to grow of our acceptance ; but the life in us to correspond with it ; it is the blessed fruit of our lives in Christ, and comes of

living in the Spirit, and of walking in the Spirit, by which living and walking we cannot fulfil the desires of the flesh.

I have spoken of Christ, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. This as to our standing before God. But He is thus also as to our life ; for what wisdom have we apart from Him ? We have only that much of wisdom which comes of Christ being in us. All else is of or from ourselves, and it is only folly. The same as to righteousness. I live righteously *because* I am righteous ; nay, *Christ* liveth in me, the effect of which is that I am living according to righteousness. Same also as to sanctification. No holiness is of any avail which is not the holiness of Christ. Christ being in us, that which is of and from Him, in our daily walk and life, is accordingly holy. This, so far as it is Christ in us, is "entire sanctification." Scripture knows no other. Absolute sanctification is a distortion of this truth. The old nature, the root and essence of which is sin, is still in every believer ;

and because of it, he never can be absolutely sanctified in this life. And, like leprosy of old, it is liable to break out anew at any time; the remedy of which is confession and repentance before God, and a renewed apprehension and enjoyment of the grace and love of God. The prevention of which is in living the life of Christ; as Paul says, Not me (not the sinful me, or me apart from Christ at all,) but *Christ* who liveth in me. The soul blessedly in communion, who is *putting on* Christ, is practically not allowing, or is *putting off*, the old man with his deeds.

The Lord bless you, beloved! the Lord keep you, and ever lift upon you the light of His countenance, and give you peace in first realizing, "I am a poor sinner; but God has sprinkled upon me the blood, and He has pronounced me clean."

SPIRITUAL HUNGER.

“ He suffered thee to hunger.”—Deut. viii. 3.

NEVER were people more helpless or dependent than Israel in the desert. A wanderer, looking on upon their condition, and seeing them, that their wants, without any human intervention, were supplied—that their raiment waxed not old upon them, neither did their feet swell those forty years—might well ask, How was it, or what had they? Ah, what indeed! They had *God*. A God who had taken them up for Himself; who had taken them up, that they might be His own chosen heritage. Like the Bride in the Canticles, they were a garden enclosed to Him, a spring shut up to Him, a fountain sealed to Him. They were for God's own especial use. How He delighted in them; finding in them an occasion for manifesting His grace and His love. He opened seas and

discomfited armies for them. He had made the bitter sweet ; palm-trees, and wells, and rivers of water, and bread had He provided. He gave them angels' food.

Nothing more revealed what Israel was than the desert. And nothing revealed *them*—their sin, their deep need, their weaknesses—which did not also manifest some fresh power and grace in God.

He suffered them to hunger, else had they not looked to Him for food, and else had He not fed them. He suffered them to hunger, that He might reveal to them His own resources, and that He might feed them, as it were, from out of His own hand. And He suffered them in their hunger to fail and faint, else had He not shown His patience, power, and grace. He *suffered* them. How I like that word. He did it that He might meet their hunger, giving them "the mighty food." He permitted it. Blessed permission! For oh, beloved, hunger is sweet. Famine is dreadful ; but when food is at hand, how precious is hunger. And when He suffered them to hunger, it was that

they might see and know more of Himself. He loved to be known and enjoyed, blessed be His name! It was thus "He made known *His ways*"—His secret ways—the ways of His love, and patience, and holiness, and grace. We, especially, who look back upon it all, have seen the end of the Lord, that He was longsuffering and gracious.

And He humbled them. The effect of His dealing was to humble them. There is nothing humbles like grace. As when Noah was in the ark, and saw all else in destruction, he was humbled at the thought of the love that had saved him. So Israel, after they had been delivered out of Egypt, or after they had gained the Canaan side of the Red Sea, or after they saw, on murmuring, instead of destruction, there was manna, or there was water, they were humbled. Ah, what shame, oftentimes, that they had ever distrusted such a God, or ever provoked such a Friend. Thus, beloved, is it with us; as we sing—

"The more Thy glories strike mine eyes,
The humbler I shall lie."

And is there nothing analagous to our own condition in this, that *He suffered them* to hunger? Was not this the very beginning of things in us? We felt as those who were in deep need. Yea, we were as if we had no home, no rest. *He suffered* us to hunger. We had no peace, no rest. What used to please, ceases to do so any longer. All the vain things that charmed us most, ceased to do so any longer. What once was as food seemed now only as ashes. *He suffered* us to hunger. The so-called pleasures of sin and the world could not satisfy us. We tried, and tried to be satisfied; but we failed. Ah! beloved, it was *He* who suffered us to want. Blessed want! with such a God to meet it. He did it, nay, He does so still—in love. And why? Because He wants us to feed only *on Him*, only *from Him*; to eat of *His* manna, to live on *His* grace, to feast on the fountain of *His* love. Beloved, do you understand? The Son of God's own love is the bread that came down from heaven. Nothing else can satisfy us. Our sins want His blood. Our consciences want

His perfectness ; we can be satisfied with nothing short of completeness. We are complete in Him. Our affections want *a person*. They cannot rest in a mere doctrine—not even in the bible, unless it disclose Him. And oh ! you remember how that, besides creating in us the hunger, He presented *Himself*. And He does so still. We *feed, live, LIVE* on Him—live on His love—saying, “I am my Beloved’s” ; and on His grace—“O to grace how great a debtor !” and on His perfectness—we are complete in Him. It was when we were in want He taught us this. He suffered us to hunger. And in our want He taught us *Himself*, as we often sing,—

“ In the desert God shall teach thee
What the God that thou hast found ;
 Patient, powerful, gracious, holy,
 All His grace shall there abound.”

But, as we have said of Israel, if He suffered them to hunger, it was that He *Himself* should feed them. He could not give that joy to another. Sweet the pain of hunger when He can come in and

surprise us with His bread. Sweet the wound when the balm is His own grace and love. He feeds His beloved still with the finest of the wheat, and rains down manna from heaven. We eat angels' food. The angels find their highest delight in God ; they live on Him. But to angels, where is there another such a feast for their joy as they find in the Son, who has revealed the Father ? The whole fulness of the Godhead dwells in Him. He is the great *Revelator* of God ; unvailing the secret love and purpose of His eternal mind. Angels find in Christ an unvailed God, and they no more look with veiled face. Hence they delight in Him ; they find their highest bliss in Him. O "with *ashes* (sins, self, the flesh, the world) who would grudge to part, when called on angels' food to feast."

Beloved, are you hungering after God ? Do you long for more of Him as your portion ? Are you especially longing for your affections, your feelings to be more feeding upon Him ; for though, as a ground of acceptance, our feelings are as rottenness ; yet

as a precious fruit of our having Christ's affections, feelings are blessed. Can there be acceptance and no affections—no feelings of rest and joy and sweetness of desire in the soul? Surely God's heart desires our warmest love. He seeketh such to worship Him who worship Him in spirit and in truth. And truly He seeketh that we should know His love, and love Him in return. And if you are thus in need of God, longing for Him, John says, "This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will He heareth us." And again, "If we know He heareth, we know we have the petitions that we desire."

FRUITFULNESS.

I HAVE been thinking much of late about the extreme weakness and sickness (spiritually) of another class of saints; so much of natural frivolity—often actual levity, and so little of the life of Christ flowing out of them—the “*much fruit*” which comes of abiding. Then, when I reflect on myself, how little power oftentimes to lift them higher! We can never, as a rule, lift anyone higher than our own measure of spiritual power or blessing. If we are living in the peace of the sanctuary before God, where “all is rest and rest for ever,” then our least words, yea, our silence, will be a power, and will give help and blessing to those who are in want.

Mere natural pleasantries often lead the soul from out of its proper subduedness before God, and from its own enjoyed communion with Him; like the little foxes, they devour the grapes—hinder the

fruit. Thus our own souls suffer loss, and others get no power, no help from us. What we want is to be "filled with the Spirit." First emptied, then filled ; it is in the overflowings of the fulness, that we become such true blessings to others. Moreover, it is the overflowings which are so precious as worship, *true* worship, before God. When we are poor and in want, that is, out of communion, we are simply craving, praying ; but when overflowing with what God puts into us from out of His fulness, we are praising, worshipping, serving. It is remarkable, in our Lord's path, how that whenever He was thrown into what may be called merely human enjoyment, as at the feast of the Pharisee, finding how it was all without God, He became, as the word is, "*offended*." Well, I know it in my own soul, that in exact proportion as professing Christians around me become, as men would say, happy, with a merely natural hilarity, I become unhappy. To withstand this we are not to be simply gloomy or religious ; but filled with the spirit of power and blessing of communion : in other words, we are to be, ourselves, always before God.

THE THREE GROANS

AND

THE THREE RESTS.

BEFORE we separate, I would just give you a few parting words, beloved, on the three groans and the three rests. I touched upon these the other evening ; but I have been asked to refer to them again.

The first groan we get in the 7th of Romans. There we have the Apostle describing himself, or personating some other, groaning deeply under the consciousness of sin ; he speaks as one who has a deep sense of the exceeding misery of sin. The groan is not merely about *sins*, but about *sin*, that evil within which is the root of all sins, from the presence of which he finds he cannot separate

himself. For the Apostle is here describing the case of a man, whose sin being discovered, is brought face to face with the law; and when the law has him in its condemning power, what can he do but exclaim, "O wretched man that I am!"

When the murderer is in the grasp of the law, and can see no escape from it, what can he do but groan? And the sinner brought only under *law*, can do nothing else than groan. For the law says that he must die, and the law is holy, just, and good: thus the man brought face to face with law, must be sensible that he is in a sad condition. If he had not known what law is, or what it must do where there is guilt, the guilt itself may seem as nothing. Says the Apostle: "Without the law sin was dead. I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died." When he saw sin in the light of law, he found himself under its sentence, found himself a dead man. I need not say that it is when a murderer sees his murder in the light of the law, that he becomes sensible of its dread evil, and

the consequences of it. And feeling the weight of the sentence which must be passed upon it, he can only groan. So says the Apostle, "When I looked at the law it revealed sin, and looking at sin only in the light of that law, and not yet knowing grace, or seeing deliverance in Christ, I could only groan; 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death!'"

You understand me, beloved, this groan of Rom. vii. is the groan of the awakened conscience of one who has seen sin; but who has seen it only in the light of the law, and therefore groans. Moreover, he tries to get rid of the evil, viz, sin in him, that law in his members, which, when he would do good, is present with him, and which has given to law power over him; but finds he cannot; and this constant failure produces a constant groan.

This is just the history in Rom. vii., of a soul brought into a sense of sin with law, but without any true sense of Christ. And this is the condition, at this present, of hundreds of souls, and of souls that are not dead souls either; but souls really

quicken of God, and therefore saved souls. But they have not an intelligent apprehension of Divine truth, and are so entirely occupied with self and sin, that they can do nothing but groan at the evil which discovers itself within. They resemble the condition of the Jew who looks only at sin in the light of God's holiness, and sees how inexorable are its demands, how irreversible is its sentence; but who does not see *Christ*. But when he sees Christ as the end of the law, when he sees that Jesus has borne the guilt, the condemnation of sin, and of sins, no matter how prodigious nor how multiplied, when he sees such ample provision made through the grace of God, then his conscience, once so burdened, gets purged as to sin. He no longer says, Who shall deliver me? He sees deliverance; nay, he is delivered, Christ has opened the door of relief; rest fills his soul, the groaning ceases, and there bursts from his joyous spirit the grateful exclamation, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" The moment *Christ* is seen, Christ, who has brought deliverance, and

not the groan which is deepest in deepest ignorance, becomes the true experience of the Christian. The 7th of Romans was never meant to be the natural condition of a Christian. In this chapter, when the true sight of Christ begins there is rest, yea, joy and strength. In the "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord," we have the loving and happy termination of the groan of the 7th of Romans.

The second groan we have in the 8th of Romans : "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now ; and not only they, but ourselves also which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." You will observe, that while the groan of the 7th of Romans is the groan of an un-intelligent though awakened conscience, this groan comes of intelligence of the evil within and around ; the more we advance in the grace and knowledge of Christ Jesus, the more holy we become, the more conscious we are of the evil and

corruption which are in the world. “I have had no sorrow,” may many a Christian say, “like the sorrow since conversion—not only the sorrow in the world; but placed in the midst of those who hate and despise the blessed Lord, and amongst whom, bending the knee in prayer, or reading the Word, is but the signal for abuse and scorn.” Do you see, beloved, this second groan is the groan of one, who, having peace as to one’s own sins, has leisure to groan for the condition of things around us; it is the groan of an enlightened conscience, the groan arising from a heart relieved of its own burden; but which understands the burden of evil which rests elsewhere. Ah! dear people, whilst the whole creation groans because of the disparity between it and God, between it and holiness; so too with the saint. He groans because of the disparity between his renewed nature and the foreign opposing elements with which that nature has so continually to come into contact. He groans, waiting for redemption; waiting for that state of blessedness where no sin,

no misery, no wickedness, no sorrow, shall ever again elicit a groan, or mar the perfect unhindered fellowship which he shall for ever enjoy with the Lord.

And now, beloved, as to the third groan ; we have it in 2 Cor. v. 4 : “ For we that are in this tabernacle do *groan*, being burdened.”

God’s eternal thought and purpose towards us was that body and soul should both be redeemed, glorified, and be for ever with the Lord ; that each member of Christ’s body should be in the same glory as the Head. To this end Christ stooped and took upon Him all the sin, the curse, the degradation of the members, that they by-and-bye, might share in all the glory and rank of their Head. Hence, the work of Christ as to His Church was as federal Head. When Jesus died, then we died ; when He bore our sins and went down into death, then, as one with Him in that death, we have died together with Him, and sin had its full end as to us ; when He was quickened, then we were quickened also ; and when He was raised, then we

also were raised, and now are seated together in Him in heavenly places.

It is in the Father's purpose, and in the Person of our Representative, and not yet as to bodily reality, that we are in the heavenlies; but we are there in spirit, and by Christ being there, we have it all in pledge; if the Head be in glory, the Church, which is His Body, must one day be in glory too. If the Head has been raised out of sin, the members are free likewise. Do you not see it, beloved? that the question is as to the Head; the only question as to your state before God, which, as Christians, you have to ask, is, "*Has Christ been raised? Has Christ died? Has Christ fully borne all God's wrath and condemnatory sentence against sin? If so, then is there no wrath, no curse, no condemnation for His members.*"

How different is all this to looking at sin merely in the light of my own corrupt heart. Looking at sin in the light of Christ risen, is like the debtor seeing his debt in the light of his liberated surety. Sin is no longer on Jesus, and, therefore, there is

now no condemnation upon His members who are one with Him. A step further, and we see *glory*. When He comes in glory we shall also be glorified with Him. Says Paul, "When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear *with Him* in glory:" for this we now groan. Says Paul, "We which are in this tabernacle do groan." Groan for what? not that we may be unclothed, not that we may die; but that we may be clothed upon with our house, our glorified body, which is from heaven. So that we groan for His coming; we groan for the hour when we shall look upon Him face to face and eye to eye; we groan to be made like Him, to have the glorified body like unto His—a body shining in the same brightness; we groan for His glory and our glory.

And now, having looked at these three groans, how does the truth concerning them allure the sinner to believe and live? for the sinner, even in the very presence of law, sin, and self, is warranted to believe and rejoice. For law, sin, and self, have been dealt with on the cross of Christ;

for not only has the law been vindicated, its sentence carried out, and its penalty endured ; not only has *sin* been made an end of, and put away in Christ ; but I, myself, that is, my old corrupt nature, have likewise been dealt with ; “ *I am crucified with Christ.* ” Any soul that can see this, and will take the benefit of it, is warranted to enjoy perfect rest and peace.

Said Jesus to that poor sinner of whom we have been speaking, “ Thy sins *are* forgiven. ” How did she *know* that they were forgiven ? In no other way than this, the Lord had said it, and she believed it ; she yielded her heart and soul to the glorious record, and as she listened and received it all implicitly as true, a calm restfulness possessed her soul.

And now, let us glance at *the three rests*. Said the blessed Lord, in Matt. xi., “ Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ” “ Weary and heavy laden, ” there you have the experience of a soul personally exercised about sin, of one who is ready to exclaim, “ The

burden of sin is intolerable. Oh, that I could find Christ! Oh, that I could get peace, could get rest!" Truly such an one is heavy laden. And this is specially the case when souls through the Spirit are first brought under the arrest of sin, when they first awake to the fearful consciousness that they are sinners, and therefore come under the doom due to sin—which is death—eternal death.

I have seen persons at such a time in such distress, that it would seem as if reason would fail under the dread conflict. Such experiences are nevertheless precious as denoting that all is not dead within; sweeter are the groans of such an awakened soul, than the chimes of many bells; no crystalline drops like those tears of contrition from hearts softened, made such by the Spirit of God. Some of you are now in sorrow. Oh! weep on, weep on, dear souls, if ye will; only remember that it is not your tears, nor your repentance, that will bring you rest; but simply believing the divine testimony. Said Jesus, "Come unto ME, and I will give you rest." You know how coming to

another under other burdens, may give relief. Imagine the case of one struggling hard from morning till night against some secular care. His mind, indeed, is anxious and depressed ; no one knows of it, no, not even his wife, for he would spare her the sorrow. "Every heart knoweth its own bitterness." But just imagine a friend being raised up in this emergency, who would say, "Come unto me, and I will meet your circumstances with the needed help." What rest would fill that anxious one, and people would say, "What a difference ! all is changed—again that easy, restful look, and his very tread is lighter."

Ah ! dear friends, when a man sees himself and his past life in the sight of God, when he begins to find out what he is before God, then he says, "I have done this and that, I have had a name for being religious ; but it has been all hollow profession, hypocrisy. Ah ! then is there not a burden ? and it soon becomes too much for him, he is weary and heavy laden, and what is he to do ? Why just to put the burden down ; and you

know, beloved, it is the easiest thing in the world to put down a burden ; to take it up may be hard, but to put it down, easy. Oh ! dear people, this is what I want every aching, sin-burdened soul here to-night to do, just to put the burden down. Says the Lord to each such weary one : " Have I not taken the load of death on Me ; have not I taken away its sting ; has not its whole weight been laid on Me ? Have not I died the just for the unjust ? Come then "unto ME, and I will *give* you *rest*." Ah ! when I find that all my sins are gone, that all the claims of God are fully satisfied, then there is rest.

This first rest, then, is a rest which Jesus gives freely and unconditionally to all who come to Him for it. The *second* rest you have in the very next verse : " Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall *find* rest unto your souls." This is spoken to the soul once burdened, but who, now it has obtained rest, has peace in believing ; to such an one it is as if the Lord said, " I want you to have something more than just rest from sin ; I would have you restful under all

circumstances, however various, however trying ; I wish to provide you with a rest which nothing shall be able to touch. But you must learn of Me, who am meek and lowly in heart."

Oh ! how difficult when provoked, to remain lowly—when irritated, to be meek. "Take my yoke upon you." "My yoke," the only yoke which He ever wore was the yoke of subjection to His Father ; His blessedness consisted in doing perfectly that Father's will. Think how wretched is the family where there are antagonistic wills, each striving for supremacy ; and so with the Christian ; he will be unhappy in proportion as he loves and clings to his own will. If the Lord's people were but wearing *His* yoke of subjection to their Father's will, if they were but in this respect walking in *His* footsteps, how much greater would be the spiritual strength of the Church of God ; how much more union would there be amongst believers. What a *visible* unity of spirit ! and how powerful as a tetimony to the world. Alas ! "Woe to the world because of offences." God

would have His people to be one, that they may bear a united testimony to the truth, that the world may believe. But the Lord's people are divided, and hence the world disbelieves. The divisions and quarrels of the Lord's people are the chief hindrance in the way of the unconverted. Alas ! "Woe to the world because of them." If we only took Christ's yoke upon us, and did God's will as Jesus did, what wondrous power, and peace, and blessing would ensue.

And it is only in proportion as we who are the Lord's saints, submit our will wholly to His will, take His yoke, and learn to be lowly and meek as He, it is only thus that we find rest—find it more and more, as we increasingly submit—an increase of this blessed rest.

And now a few concluding words upon the *third* rest—"the rest that remaineth." Writes the Apostle in the Epistle to the Hebrews : "There *remaineth* therefore a rest to the people of God." Though we have much in hand, we have more in prospect. Though we have rest as to sin in the past, though

we have rest in the midst of present conflict and sorrow ; yet there is something beyond all this, a rest still in anticipation, a rest in heaven, a rest in and with God ; a rest like God's own rest. God rested from His work on the seventh day ; and soon we too shall rest from our works ; not from bad works, of which there ought to be none, not from the flesh merely, which now we should seek to mortify ; but we shall rest from all our works. They were blessed works from which God rested. He said they were "good." So with us—labour for the Lord—sorrow for evils in us and around us—these, and many others, are good ; but we shall rest from them. We shall rest in a more perfect sense than now. We shall rest as God rests. Then no wearied heart ; then, no striving with evil ; then, no conflict with sin ; then, no unsatisfied longing ; then, no panting after good ; but perfect rest ; the new man will rest, rest as *God* rests. We shall enter into *His* rest, and have perfect fellowship, perfect assimilation to the image of the Lord.

THE COMING GLORY.

“ Ever with the Lord.”—1 Thessalonians iv. 17.

OH ! what shall I do, Lord, when first I behold
Thyself in the glory so often foretold ?
What moment of rapture, the highest for me,
When once I shall see Thee, and near Thee shall be !

Say, shall I indulge, Lord, low down at Thy feet,
My soul in the thought of her portion so great ?
Or shall I, forgetful of all I may be,
Think only of what is so blessed in Thee ?

Oh, fain would I rest on Thy bosom so dear ;
Thou, blessed Lord Jesus, wilt welcome me there ;
Thy words, and Thy love, and Thy joy all divine,
Will shew how completely Thou ownest me Thine.

How could I thus near Thee, 'mid glory so fair,
 Turn off my fond gaze from Thy preciousness there,
 Unless it were looking more fully to know
 What streams from Thy presence for ever must flow.

With harp for my hand, or a crown for my brow,
 How could I on *them* my first moments bestow ?
 It seems as if thousands of ages must roll
 Ere ought but Thyself could engage my rapt soul.

To dwell on Thy saints, e'en their rapture and love,
 How blessed soever their portion above,
 Were nothing, though they are Thy truest delight,
 Like gazing on Thee, Lord, transcendantly bright.

Oh! this be my worship, sweet worship of heaven !
 To gaze on those hands, and those feet that were riven,
 To see my Beloved, and own Him as mine,
 And know I am His in His deep love divine.

Ah, Lord ! I will leave it for that coming day,
 When Thou in the glory wilt mark out my way,
 Assured that whatever that glory may be,
 I shall find all my heaven for ever in Thee.

Meanwhile for this glory my spirit must wait,
And count all but dross for a glory so great;
What oceans on oceans e'er long will o'erflow
Of "love passing knowledge" eternal to know.

Then come, O Lord Jesus, yea, come quickly, now,
Thy church waits to see Thee, Thy now radiant brow;
Content in Thy presence for ever to be,
She'll cast all her crowns, blessed Jesus, to Thee.

THE LORD'S LILIES.

CANTICLES ii. 1.

I AM the lily of the valleys." "My Beloved feedeth among the lilies," (chap. ii. 16.) "My Beloved is gone down into His garden to the beds of spices, to feed in the garden, and to gather lilies."

These last words, beloved, plainly show who the lilies were; not the Lord: for He does not feed on Himself, or gather Himself. The lilies among whom He feeds, and whom He gathers, are the Bride—in principle, ourselves. The lily is perfect, spotless, complete, as are all saints in the Lord's own estimate of them, seen from eternity in Himself, with all that He could invest them with—wisdom, right-

eousness, holiness, redemption ; nay, even as He is Himself ; for if He made man in His own likeness, in Him the whole Godhead dwells gloriously in our nature. And we in His purpose were eternally with Him, and in His own likeness.

But how can this be ? The root-meaning of the lily is “the changed one.” We were dead in trespasses and sins ; we *are* quickened together with Christ, and are changed into the same image. Moreover, we were in ourselves dead ; but are now made alive, are born again. This is what we now are morally, made alive ; but a further change awaits us. We are to be raised and glorified. Life in Eve was as old as Adam ; he never had an existence without her ; she was in him from the first—bone of his bone. So also with us and Christ ; as John says, (1st Epistle,) “We shew unto you that *eternal* life, which *was with the Father*, and was manifested unto us. That “Life which was with the Father,” we have.

Resurrection, as seen in the Word, is as old as the formation of Eve. That bone, when in Adam,

might have had life, it was in the scene of life; but when taken *from* Adam, what life had it? Could anything be more dead than a bone separated from the system of organism to which it belonged; yet out of death God produced life.

It is the first sight we find of resurrection; here in Eve is God giving life to the dead; and when He gave it life, Eve awoke in Adam's likeness. When we awake in our coming incorruption, we shall be still with Him, the second Adam; and as Adam said, "This is Eve," knowing and loving her; so Christ, He will own us, and share with us His own likeness, and we shall be His image—we shall shine in His likeness—appear in the same incorruption with Himself; so that He will not be ashamed to call us brethren. Ah, beloved, it is indeed true that we *are poor sinners*; but it is also true that we are far more; there is nothing beyond us—so great is the height to which He has raised us—but God Himself, from out of whose fulness it is we are filled; and all this His own want—that as it was not good for man to be alone, so it was

not good for Christ to be without His Church. Such are the lilies; and such is Christ's estimation of them. But what He now does is brought out in the other two verses.

He "*feedeth* among the lilies," and He "*gathers*" them. What food was it to Him when He saw Himself in Adam, and said it was very "good." With what joy did He come to Abraham! and how did He allow the patriarch to feast Him under the tree! His goings were of old, and His delights were with the sons of men.

As to the incarnate love, how did He feast Himself, as in John iv., "Woman," said He, "give *Me* to drink." This He asks of every redeemed sinner: "Give Me your confidence, give Me your affections." How did He eat with sinners: It was not Simon that constituted the feast, nor was the feast itself which Simon provided that on which the blessed One really feasted. Over, and over, and over again, did He touchingly say, "*this woman.*" And after resurrection He is the unchangeable One, still feeding wherever there was a heart that knew

Him, coming as He did. to Mary at the sepulchre. And although ascended, He is the same now. He comes to us not merely to feed, which He does ; but to be fed. Beloved, are we feeding Him ? What affections do we give Him ? What confidence ? What joy ? Or when He comes down to His garden, to what should be a bed of spices, do we give Him our doubts, or our fears, or our exercises of gloom and wretchedness ? Does He ask for love, and do we give Him division ? Does He ask for communion, and do we give Him disobedience ? Poor food, to give Him *ourselves*.

In Zechariah (chap. iv.) the provision was, that from out of the golden bowl in the centre, on which might be inscribed, "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," should flow the oil down into all the seven lamps, that burning they may say, "Of Thy fulness have we received." But then, from these the provision was that the treasure should flow back again into the bowl at the centre ; so that upon the returning pipes might be written, "Of Thine own have we given Thee."

All this, beloved, now ; but oh, the feeding, the eternal, the ineffable joy that He will have through the ages in the glory, when it will be seen and known why, for Himself and the whole character and display of the Godhead, it was *not* good for Him to be without us.

In similar strain we might show how He gathers the lilies. He gathers them *by* Himself ; draws them—"I, if I be lifted up, will draw."

"Jesus sought me when a stranger ;"

He gathers *unto* Himself, shews us the riches of His timeless love, leads us on to those of the future glory ; and gathered to Him, we are gathered to one another. We believe in the one Body, and have the one Spirit, and own the one Lord, and the one unity of the Spirit ; He can feed wherever two or three are gathered in His name, feed on their memories and knowledge of His dying love. He gathers them to Himself. Our *mind* He already has : "Set your affections on things above." Our spirit, if He tarries, He will soon have with Him in Paradise, as if He had said, "If I cannot have you all, if the time

of incorruptible body is not yet, I will have what I may; absent from the body you shall be present with Me." For He might have left all saints here till the morning of incorruption; but no! some are with Him where He is, yet are they of the Church, which is His body as well as we. Church and body are terms interchangeable, and not, as some suppose meaning different things. Paul in Paradise and ourselves in the wilderness are equally members of "the Church which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all."

But one thing remains; it is what Paul calls, "Our gathering together unto Him," for which purpose He Himself will come. A word, beloved, on the promise of the blessed Lord to come for us, concerning the seeming sleep which has again fallen on saints. Only a few years past, there was so blessed a sense of this blessed hope, that, like Aaron's rod, it swallowed up all other considerations; but now, even those who hold it most firmly as a truth, seem to be sleeping even as others; and with some "the body" seems to have taken the

place of "the Head," and the Church the place of Christ; questions on atonement, simple for a child, have become perplexing studies to the most vigorous minds. Many other practical considerations may suggest themselves here, as to what saints in their lives ought to be. Alas! the lily, from its very perfectness, is the first on the wayside to show the dust contracted by its contact with the passers by. How it needs the dews and the rains to keep it from daily assoilment! "Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me," was the prayer of the blessed Lord, and living in the thought and power of that word we shall keep ourselves in the love of God. It has been shewn the lilies signifies "changed ones;" what change may not even now transpire! Salvation is a finished salvation, its time is *now*, "now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation."

THE WHITE STONE.

I HAVE been thinking how, in the coming glory, individual approval by Christ will be among its most precious joys.

The secret name on the white stone will give *secret* delight. The church may fail, but individuals, in the midst of corruption, will overcome. Hidden manna and a white stone are to be given to them. What a gift, each of these, beloved ! Sweet the state of soul which now covets such gifts, and such a Giver. It is *Himself* the blessed Giver gives, for He is the manna ; not for admiration ; not for adoring, so much, though He is for these ; but for a *feast* for His loved ones who have overcome. And what a feast ! They will not feast on what is sparse or small, but on Himself ; on that which will eternally satisfy. How our

souls long for this. The manna of old was *seen*, and known to all. This is *hidden* manna ; some sweetness, some preciousness never before revealed or known ; some joy, some love, never before imagined or conceived. Do we not seem to know that there are such unrevealed glories in the blessed Lord, and that our souls have a capacity to feed on them, yea, to feed on Him for ever. And that stone, a *white* one, all perfectness, with a new name. He knew the name He had for Abraham and for Jacob. How sweet to them when they also knew ; so will it be in the glory to those who overcome. Our souls will be ravished with His love, which cannot do too much for us.

What communion is it now, when we can drink from His joy, feed from His love ! He had joy and love which were from before creation, before dispensations, and are independent of them. The glory is only of yesterday ; nay, is not yet ; but the love, which gave the glory, is eternal—the love of the Father. When our souls are low, and we are faint, we must *eat* of the manna. “ This is the bread which the Lord hath given *us to eat*.”

Sweet, hidden manna ! What *restored* communion
 when we get into His own joy, the joy which He
 has in and over us !

My soul, withdrawn from all things present here,
 Now waits her best Beloved's voice to hear ;
 Reveal Thyself, dear Lord ! Thy face I'd see,
 All else is one dark wilderness to me ;
 Thy secret owning freshens all my love,
 And bids each murmuring of my heart remove.

Speak to me, Lord, that I may inly know
 More of Thy wondrous life, Thy death of woe ;
 Much more Thy love—its preciousness reveal,
 Much more on me Thy perfect image seal ;
 Such likeness, through Thy Spirit, I would wear,
 E'en now much more Thy full resemblance bear.

Speak to me, Lord, of Thy most precious blood,
 Drawn from Thy open wounds—that cleansing flood !
 Make sure its power my inmost thoughts within,
 And peace and freedom give through death for sin,
 My heart can only find its true repose,
 As thus the value of Thy blood it knows.

Speak to me, Lord, of Thy deep, perfect joy,
 On Thee alone I would my praise employ ;
 Oh, I have found it blest indeed to be
 Rapt in the thought of Thy vast ecstasy !
 The Shepherd-joy Thou hast o'er Thy dear sheep,
 Is that which makes their joy in Thee so sweet.

Speak to me, Lord, much more of Thy blest ways :
 Who knows Thee most, will most declare Thy praise :
 Still show what's wrong in word or thought in me,
 By sight of perfectness divine in Thee.
 Jesus, to share the secrets of Thy breast
 Is the sure pledge of holiest, happiest rest.

Ah, Lord ! Thou soon wilt give to those who keep
 Each word of Thine, in fond obedience sweet,
 The secret manna—and wilt gracious own,
 Engraven pure upon that living stone,
 The new, blest, promised name, which no man knows,
 But who, when tried, in such obedience grows.

O secret joy ! this promised food of heaven ;
 And secret love ! this blood-bought new name given ;
 What gladness in that coming day to see
 This joy ! this love ! this holy sympathy !

But say, can such a worthless one as I,
Ere have from Thee, my Lord, such love, such joy ?

O love divine ! how sweet that love at last,
When present death, and present ills are past ;
O everlasting joy ! how deep, how high,
To see Thee, blessed Lord, and be for ever nigh ;
Thy weakest one on earth, tñrough Thy blest name,
Such joy, such love, eternal may obtain.

ETERNAL DEATH.

WE have spoken of life, life in Christ; but what of death—eternal death?

We are told of Archibald Boyle, who was a member of an infidel club, called "*The Hell-fire Club*,"* that one night he dreamed that he was in hell.

He tried to shut his eyes. He found he could not. He threw himself down, but the pavement of hell, as with a living and instinctive movement, rejected him from its surface; and, forced upon his feet, he found himself compelled to gaze with still increasing intensity of horror at the ever-changing, yet ever-steady torrent of eternal torment. And this was hell!—the scoffer's jest—the by-word of the profligate!

*See authentic account: Tract Depot, D'Olier-street, Dublin

"Take me," shrieked Boyle, "take me from this place. By the living God, whose name I have so often outraged, I adjure Thee — take me from this place."

"Canst thou still name His name?" said a fiend, with a hideous sneer; "go then; but—in a year and a day, we meet, to part no more!"

Boyle awoke, and he felt as if the last words of the fiend were traced in letters of living fire upon his heart and brain. Unable, from actual bodily ailment, to leave his bed for several days, the horrid vision had full time to take effect upon his mind; and many were the pangs of tardy remorse and ill-defined terror that beset his vice-stained soul, as he lay in darkness and seclusion, to him so very unusual.

He resolved utterly and for ever, to forsake "The Club." Above all, he determined that nothing on earth should tempt him to join the next annual festival.

From that he shrunk with an instinctive horror, and made up his mind *utterly to avoid it*. Well

aware of this resolve, his companions determined he should have no choice. How potent, how active, is the spirit of evil! How feeble is unassisted, Christless, *unprayerful* man! Boyle found himself, he could not tell how, seated at that table on that very day, where he had sworn to himself a thousand times nothing on earth should make him sit.

His ears tingled, and his eyes swam, as he listened to the opening sentence of the president's address: "Gentlemen, this is leap year; therefore it is a *year and a day* since our last annual meeting.

Every nerve in Boyle's body twanged in agony at the ominous, the well-remembered words. His first impulse was to rise and fly; but then—*the sneers! the sneers!*

How many in this world, as well as poor Boyle, have sold their souls to the dread of a sneer, and dared the wrath of an almighty and eternal God rather than encounter the sarcastic curl of a fellow-creature's lip.

He was more than ever plied with wine, applause, and every other species of excitement, but in vain.

His mirth, his wit, were like lurid flashes from the bosom of a brooding thunder-cloud, that pass and leave it all darker than before ! and his laugh sounded fiendish even to the evil ears that heard it.

The night was gloomy, with frequent and fitful gusts of chill and howling wind, as Boyle, with fevered nerves and heated brain, called for his horse and left the house.

The following morning the well-known black steed was found, with saddle and bridle on, quietly grazing on the road side, about half-way to Boyle's country house, and a few yards from it lay the stiffened corpse of its master.

Reader, although this is but a dream, it is, nevertheless, a well authenticated fact ; and God, who has the power of communicating with the minds of His creatures, did doubtless speak by this dream to poor Archibald Boyle, and through the same dream He now speaks to *you*.

"How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation."

Reader, a dream of being lost is truly horrible ;

yet not half so horrible as the reality. Ah no ; no dream can picture the full, long misery of "the worm that dieth not," "the fire that is never quenched," the woe that never ends.

That which is bottomless can never be fathomed : that which is infinite can never be measured. And the most wonderful, nay, the most dreadful thought is, that there is in our nature a capacity to endure it.

O reader, if under the poison of infidelity, you have been led to doubt the existence of hell, or to doubt the eternity of its duration, I pray God you may believe the awful reality, ere it be too late. God has spoken.* His Word is eternal truth. Doubt the reality of hell, and you treat that Word

* The following texts are selected out of many, for the purpose of showing that the three different words or modes of expression in the Greek Testament, which are translated "eternal," "for ever," and "for ever and ever," are, each of them, used to express the co-eternity of God's existence, the believer's blessedness, and the punishment of unbelievers and wicked spirits in hell fire ;—

I. *αἰώνιος*.—Eternal, or everlasting.

"The commandment of the *everlasting God*." (Rom. xvi. 26.)

as a lie ! Doubt the reality of hell, and you destroy the moral government of God ! Even human government cannot enter into a compromise with crime. It must punish it. If it did not punish it, it would encourage it. So if *God* did not punish sin, His indifference to it would encourage it. If

"God who hath given us *everlasting consolation*." (2 Thess. ii. 16.)

"To be cast into *everlasting fire*." (Matt. xviii. 8.)

"*Everlasting fire* prepared for the devil and his angels." (Matt. xxv. 41.)

II. εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.—For ever.

"The Son abideth *for ever*." (John viii. 35.)

"Whoso eateth of this bread shall *live for ever*." (John vi. 51.)

"To whom is reserved the *blackness of darkness for ever*." (Jude 13.)

III. εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων.—For ever and ever.

"God who *liveth for ever and ever*." (Rev. xv. 7.)

"They shall *reign for ever and ever*." (Rev. xxii. 5.)

"The smoke of their torment ascendeth *for ever and ever*." (Rev. xiv. 11.)

"The devil—shall be *tormented for ever and ever*," (Rev. xx. 10.)

From the testimony of these Scriptures, the conclusion, is inevitable, that any attempt to limit the duration of future punishment, involves the limitation of God's existence, and of His people's blessedness.

See "Eternal Life, or Eternal Death," D'Olier-street, Dublin.

God did not punish sin, where were His holy abhorrence of it? If God did not punish sin, His kingdom would be a moral chaos.

Reader, had the poor dreamer gone direct from his sense of hell to *Christ*, to Him who died to save us from its coming wrath, how different his end! In Christ he would have found a Deliverer from hell; for in Him he would have found One, who, sinless Himself, was competent to undertake the sinner's cause, and who had borne the dreadful judgment of sin in His own blessed person. God could not clear the guilty, and as Christ stood for the guilty, God could not, and did not clear Him. But now, Christ having, in His infinite grace, endured the doom of the guilty—having expiated the sin of the sinner, both the Surety and the sinner who trusts in Him, are free. It is this which constitutes the gospel. And it is the belief of this gospel which gives perfect peace and power over sin.

The poor dreamer, it would seem, did not know this. But, reader, *you* do. You are told it *now*.

Let the words sound in your ears—*Hell!* HELL! HELL! But with those awful words drink in also the glad tidings of salvation, which proclaim to us, on the authority of God, that the hell due to the sinner, Christ has suffered, for He “*suffered the just for the unjust.*” “*He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities.*” He died for the sinner—the vilest and greatest. He did it, that the sinner believing in Jesus “*might not perish, but have everlasting life.*” God now proclaims the fact. He freely publishes it, that all who believe—who take to themselves the benefit of that stupendous fact which was consummated upon Calvary for the salvation of the lost—are free! How wonderful! how blessed! Would that men did but know and believe it.

Reader, no messenger from hell may ever tell you that “*in a year and a day you may meet to part no more.*” But what, if in much less time than that, you ARE *dead*, and in *eternity*? Solemn consideration! As a servant of Christ, I am bound, in loving boldness, to ask you, if it should be so,

would it be *heaven* or *hell* to you? Remember, this very paper may fall from your dead hand!

“ Only this frail and fleeting breath,
Preserves us from the jaws of death ;
Soon as it fails, at once we're gone,
And plunged into a world unknown.”

Reader, *are you saved*? In other words, have you believed the good news which this little paper brings to you from the God of grace? Have you believed how God, in grace towards us, gave His Son to die, and how that death, while it showed His love to the sinner, was also the judgment borne for his sin. Have you thus seen Him, “ *a just God and a Saviour*”? It is only to see it, believe it, and to find rest for your soul. “ We who have believed do enter into rest.” (Heb. iv. 3.)

Reader, the moment is favourable. “ *Now is the accepted time.*” To-day is “ *the day of salvation.*” Why to-day? Because all the yesterdays of your life are gone, and to-morrow to *you* may never come. “ *To-day,*” then, “ *if you will hear His voice*”—yea, *now*—spell the word over in your thoughtful mind —“ *now, now ;*” ah, yes, NOW, whilst the day of salvation continues, and ere the curtain of life is

lifted, and hell and eternity are disclosed, receive Christ as your Saviour.

But see from the narrative you have read, how the dread of hell never saves, or any vows or resolutions which we may make. They are no match for temptations, or for the jeers and scoffs of godless men. They are a poor substitute for what God has provided as the antidote for sin. The poor dreamer had these; he *had* a dread of hell; he *had* a dread even of a *dream* of hell! He *did make* vows. He formed resolutions. But his fears, and his vows, and his resolutions, did not save him. What saves, and what fortifies us when saved, it is believing on the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour. It is trusting in *Him* who *died for us*; who "*hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.*" Then all condemnation is overpast; hell with all its horrors is gone; the worm and the flame, and the billowy fires of perdition, can then menace us no more.

As soon as we *believe in Christ*, the benefit of His death is reckoned unto us. We become thus

associated with Him, and are said to have "*died with Him*," to have received our condemnation and judgment *in Him*; so that now "we are as He is"—justified, free. And it is knowing and believing this which gives us victory over our vile lusts and selfishness. "*If any man be in Christ he is a new creature. Old things are passed away, behold all things are become new.*" He becomes, through faith, a child of God, (Gal. iii. 26,) and then the Holy Spirit comes and dwells in his heart, giving him power over temptation, making him to love God, and making it his delight to do God's will, and to live to His glory.

Oh then, reader, if it be so, ere you lift your eyes from this paper, *believe*, BELIEVE; or if you lift them, let it be to heaven in adoring love, that ONE who is now there, once took our place in death, that we, as dead and risen with Him, might have His life, His righteousness, His peace, His joy, His glory, and be for ever with Him. Oh, then, cast your wondering believing eyes on Him! "*Hear, and your soul shall live.*" (Isaiah lv. 3.)

